



# Power Lines

April 2016

Florida League of Middle Schools

[www.flms.org](http://www.flms.org)

## Inside This Issue:

- 1 Save the date!
- 2 Conference Information
- 3 Conference Schedule and Bios
- 4 Conference Registration
- 5-6 The Minions
- 7-9 End of School Activities
- 10 2015 Board Members
- 11 Registration

## SAVE THE DATE!

The 45th Annual FLMS  
State Conference will be:  
**June 17-18, 2016**

Middle Schools - Creating  
Communities for Kids With  
"Hearts" and "Smarts" ...  
Leaders and Learners  
Working Better Together!

**Featured Speakers:**  
Dr. Howard Johnston,  
Emeritus Professor of  
Teaching and Learning,  
University of South Florida

Dr. Cedrick Gray,  
Superintendent of Schools,  
Jackson Public Schools,  
Jackson, Mississippi

# Conference Information



Reflecting back to the middle school philosophy of teaching the whole child, it is imperative in today's world that our young adolescents not only learn cognitive skills and processes but also have opportunities for sharing and communicating affective beliefs and values. Creating school culture, climate and classrooms that practice and encourage tolerance, respect, caring and other affective principles must be a part of the learning community and modeled throughout the school by all stakeholders. This year's theme focuses on that idea.

Dr. Cedrick Gray will kick off the conference Friday with the beginning of our leadership strand. This session will speak directly to building the culture and climate needed in today's school that will support the development of young people for the success of our future.

Dr. Gray is a dynamic speaker and you don't want to miss this session! His presentation will be followed by our FUN networking, social in the boathouse. Come join us for both events.

Saturday, our keynote speaker will be Dr. Howard Johnston from USF. You will leave thinking about his powerful message and how it will impact you, your students and your classroom.

Breakout sessions will follow presented by practitioners from around the state. Please submit your presentations early, so as not to be left out. Keeping with the affective/cognitive theme of "hearts" and "smarts" and building communities, it should be easy to connect to most presentations. Dr. Gray will continue with the Leadership Strand throughout the day for Administrators. We will end the learning part of the day with the sharing sessions, mini PLC's.

T-shirts, gift baskets, door prizes, the FLMS bookstore and exhibitors will complete the fun. Don't miss out on this action packed conference!

# Conference Schedule & Bios

- 10:00–3:30 p.m. . . . . Executive Board Meeting
- 4:00–5:00 p.m. . . . . Pre Conference Session  
Dr. Cedrick Gray, Superintendent
- 5:30–7:00 p.m. . . . . Conference Social – Boat House
- 3:00–7:00 p.m. . . . . Conference Registration

Friday,  
June 17

- 7:30 a.m. . . . . Registration
- 8:30–9:30 a.m. . . . . Opening General Session  
Welcome and Keynote Address: Dr. Howard Johnson
- 9:30–10:00 a.m. . . . . Coffee Break
- 10:00–11:00 a.m. . . . . Session 1
- 11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m. . . . . Session 2
- 12:15–1:30 p.m. . . . . Lunch
- 1:10–1:30 p.m. . . . . Regional Meetings
- 1:45–2:45 p.m. . . . . Session 3
- 2:45–3:15 p.m. . . . . Popcorn and Lemonade
- 3:15–4:00 p.m. . . . . Sharing Session – Mini PLC's
- 4:00 p.m. . . . . Baskets and Door Prizes

Saturday,  
June 18



**DR. CEDRICK GRAY**

Dr. Cedrick Gray is the superintendent of Jackson Public Schools in Jackson, Mississippi, where he is considered an agent of educational change and reform. He has also served as a teacher, an assistant principal, a director of leadership development, and a superintendent of school improvement.

As a former middle school principal, Dr. Gray was credited for the academic and cultural turnaround of two urban middle schools. Dr. Gray has presented at state and national conferences including the AMLE annual conference. He currently serves as a faculty member for the AMLE Leadership Institute. His engaging presentations are filled with practical and inspiring information.



**DR. HOWARD JOHNSTON**

Howard Johnston is Emeritus Professor of Teaching and Learning at the University of South Florida. He has authored over 150 works on middle-level education and has presented more than 2000 invited papers, lectures, and keynote addresses in all 50 U.S. states, Canada, Europe, South America, Asia, and the Caribbean. In addition to nine books, he has published in the NASSP Bulletin, Principal Leadership, Middle School Journal, Phi Delta Kappan, School Administrator, Schools in the Middle, School Boards Journal, and other scholarly publications. Howard received his BA and MA from the State University of New York at New Paltz and his Ph.D. from the University of Wyoming.

He is the recipient of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Distinguished Service Award, the National Middle School Association's Presidential Award for Excellence, the Gruhn-Long Award for lifetime service to middle-level education, and NMSA's John Lounsbury Award for lifetime achievement.

# Conference Registration

Make plans now to attend the 45th Annual FLMS Conference at the Hyatt Regency on June 17 and 18, 2016 in Sarasota, FL. **Bring your family and enjoy the pool, the beach and this beautiful Florida city.**

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Name

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School

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Zip

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E-mail Address

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Phone Number

## TYPE OF REGISTRATION

- Individual (Members) . . . . . \$155
- Individual (Non-Members). . . . . \$180
- Student . . . . . \$50
- School/Group (Receive 5% discount when ten or more people register at one time. Please include all registration forms together.)

**Make checks or purchase orders payable to FLMS.  
Please mail registration form and your payment to:**

**Kathy Shewey**  
9436 SW 32nd Lane  
Gainesville, FL 32608  
Phone: 352-332-1877  
kathy.shewey@gmail.com

**\*Cancellations  
will not be refunded**

## Exhibitor Information

**Cathy Egley**  
180 Gray Dove Ct.  
Daytona Beach, FL 32119  
jetski@bellsouth.net

## HOTEL RESERVATIONS

**Group rate,  
Hyatt Regency Sarasota  
online at:  
<http://bit.ly/FLMS2016>  
or call:  
1-888-421-1442**

# The Minions

by Terri Golden - Florida Virtual School

Young adolescents require drastically different and unique approaches to education. Middle school educators have always understood that the biological events of puberty fundamentally disrupt the somewhat smooth development of elementary school years and have a profound impact upon the cognitive, social, and emotional lives of young teens. In line with this important insight, educators see the need for the delivery of special instructional and administrative changes in the way that education takes place for kids in early adolescence. In the brick-and-mortar schools, those changes were the establishment of a mentor relationship between teacher and student, the creation of small communities of learners, and the implementation of a flexible interdisciplinary curriculum that encourages active and personalized learning.

Florida Virtual School (FLVS) has always had a flexible and personalized learning environment conducive to middle level learners. In 2015, Marie Mitchell, principal at FLVS, pioneered the unique program that would meet the special developmental needs of early adolescents. Marie believed it was essential to escalate our current practices and work on strategies that would benefit our unique learners. She assembled the teachers from Language Arts (Cindy Harrison) and Social Studies (David Fellows) to team up and share the same students. These students were called “The Minions,” and were part of many new programs at FLVS including advisor/advisee, virtual learning with students from London, student council which sponsored Virtual Movie Night, community projects, and collaboration lessons formed in a virtual office. I was the lead teacher in charge of making sure these students felt included and part of a smaller team. Due to this type of virtual teaming, the kids felt a more personal adult relationship, and also felt that their voices were heard. There was more engaged learning. This was proven by the fact that these teachers had the highest numbers of participation of students in live lessons, affective, and academic activities at FLVS. These activities are voluntary, yet The Minions enjoyed them and attended them more than other virtual students. Team Minion had more positive role models in this program due to the fact that the two teachers shared 150 students, they had two lead teachers, a principal, and older student ambassadors to communicate with and assist in their schooling.

Middle school students, ages 9-15, are entering the emotional turmoil of adolescence and are arriving at a major shift in their ability to think. Now, for the first time, they can focus on thinking itself and reflect on what they are learning.

# The Minions

by Terri Golden - Florida Virtual School

Helping students use their new mindset in reflecting on school, learning study skills, and setting goals for themselves is the type of metacognitive strategies we teach on Team Minion. We do this through constant telephone calls, text, emails, Facetime, Skype, and Blackboard Collaborate meetings.

Quality middle schools allow student initiated learning and student shaped school activities. Minion Council was formed to allow virtual education students to provide meaningful feedback of their school environment. The online student-led team initiated fun activities like Bring a Pet to School Day and Crazy Sock and Hat Day. They also pioneered community activities such as donations for Toys for Tots and Make Valentines for Senior Citizens.

Recent achievement dialogue has placed social and emotional progress on hold while the focus is on tests and academic scores. Effective middle schools teach both to help students develop their emotional intelligence and their intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1993; Goleman, 1997). They use cooperative learning as a key to fostering positive social relationships. FLVS engages students in curriculum-related activities that serve to develop their social and emotional intelligences. We use a virtual office to create things like flipped lessons, to collaboratively write argumentative essays, or even to participate in poetry parties.

Before the academic collaborate activity, The Minions participate in an advisor/advisee or social lessons. These events include Virtual Recess, Grammar Giggles, goal setting, and self-esteem activities. Since the “emotional brain” is particularly active at this age, we wanted to build into the curriculum topics that have emotional and engaging content (Gottman & Declaire, 1998).

FLVS has strong academic standards and still understands the developmental needs of teens, and in particular their neurological, social, emotional, and metacognitive growth. These middle school values can be implemented in the virtual world, too.

## Resources:

Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Gottman, J., & Declaire, J. (1998). *Raising an emotionally intelligent child*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

# End of School Activities

Are you looking for ideas of learning activities for the "Winding Down" days? Your students might get a kick out of some of these:

## Produce a TV Commercial

Challenge students to create a new breakfast cereal. Each student creates packaging and a TV commercial pitch to go along with it.

Record students as they present their TV commercials!



## Word Cloud

Have students write something nice about each of their classmates at the end of the year and then put it into Wordle.



## Hi, My Name Is

Teachers often pass along information about their students to the teacher who will work with them the following year. It's important to get information, like which students really shouldn't be in a group together, which parents expect you to communicate weekly, and which parents are challenging to get in touch with, etc. However, we often discover that the students have changed over the summer, or that the students who might have made last year's teacher crazy are some of your favorite students this year. You just never know. That's why I like to give my students an opportunity to introduce themselves to their next teacher *in their own words*.

Have your class write letters of introduction that you can pass along to their next teacher. You'll be surprised how honest they'll be about what they do well, what they struggle with, and what they hope to accomplish next school year. And, you'll be happy knowing that you're still reviewing important skills like letter writing, spelling, and using appropriate language for the audience (their next teacher) to whom they are speaking/writing.

# End of School Activities

## Get Some Feedback

As teachers, we are trained to give feedback – both positive and negative. Rarely do we get the opportunity to take time to just celebrate all the wonderful qualities our students possess and display throughout the school year. Take some time in these last few weeks to hold a fun event where you provide each student with a certificate celebrating what makes them special. You can find lists of silly awards online, but some that I have given out are:

- The Colgate Award: for always displaying a bright smile.
- The Well-Rounded Award: for excellence in a variety of subjects or activities.
- The Honest Abe Award: for always being truthful.
- The Sunshine Award: for always possessing a bright, cheerful disposition.



## People of the Year

Time Magazine can't have all the fun. Help your students compile a book of the "People of the Year" for your class. Make sure to include important people from history (say, Obama and Romney) as well as important people to your classroom (the custodian, the principal and even that crotchety lunch lady).



## Alpha Autobios

Invite students to create their own alphabetical autobiographies. Here's an example: "A is for Arkansas; that's where I was born. B is for Bonnie; that's my sister's name. C is for Cub Scouts; That's my favorite activity." // See more [HERE](#).



## Count 'Em Up

Get students counting by having them use a calendar to figure out how many Mondays you've had this year, how many Fridays, how many P.E. days and how many Jello-in-the-cafeteria days. Then work together to make a bar graph and hang it on the wall.



# End of School Activities

Inspired by the popular TV show, creating and implementing Minute to Win It games in the classroom is a snap!

## Cookie Face

This is a great game to kick off the party because all of the players can compete at the same time (or you can break it down into several rounds of game play). Each player places a cookie on their forehead and the goal is to get the cookie into your mouth using only your facial muscles in under 1 minute. No hands!



## Moving Nerds With Tweezers

Using tweezers (plastic or metal) and Nerds candy, students move Nerds individually from one pile on a paper plate to an empty paper plate. The team with the most Nerds on the transfer plate after one minute wins!



## Suck It Up

Players place a straw in their mouth and use suction to transfer a pile of 25 M&M's from one plate to another in under one minute. Only one hand may be used to hold the straw. Everyone gets to eat their candy when the round is finished! This game also works well with 3 players competing in each round.



## Defy Gravity

Using only one hand, players must keep two balloons from touching the ground for one minute. For a more challenging game, increase the amount to three balloons per player (and use different colored balloons for each player to make it easy to differentiate!). No holding the balloons! 2 players per round of competition worked well to give the players ample space to knock their balloons around

# 2015 Board Members

<b>Executive Director</b> Steve Frazier Email: <a href="mailto:stevefrazier@browardschools.com">stevefrazier@browardschools.com</a>	<b>Chairperson</b> Maureen Shankman Email: <a href="mailto:shankman.maureen@gmail.com">shankman.maureen@gmail.com</a>
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<b>Region 6 Director</b> TBA	<b>Region 7 Director</b> Claudia Manjarres Email: <a href="mailto:Claudia.manjarres@browardschools.com">Claudia.manjarres@browardschools.com</a>
<b>Florida Virtual School Director &amp; Newsletter Editor</b> Terri Golden Email: <a href="mailto:tgoldenhart@yahoo.com">tgoldenhart@yahoo.com</a>	<b>Board Advisor &amp; Conference Book Store</b> Sharen Lewis Email: <a href="mailto:slewis9@comcast.net">slewis9@comcast.net</a>
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<b>Board Advisor</b> Janet Spence Email: <a href="mailto:Janet.Spence@SDHC.k12.fl.us">Janet.Spence@SDHC.k12.fl.us</a>	<b>Board Advisor</b> Chet Sanders Email: <a href="mailto:chet.sanders@gmail.com">chet.sanders@gmail.com</a>

# Registration

## Why Join?

- Ⓢ Support middle level education throughout the state of Florida
- Ⓢ Have access to great resources and professional development
- Ⓢ Attend state and regional conferences
- Ⓢ Join now to have your membership extended through June

### FLORIDA LEAGUE OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

#### Membership Registration Form, Yearly from July 1 - June 30

Membership Type

Institutional/School Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual     \$25.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Institutional/School     \$150.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

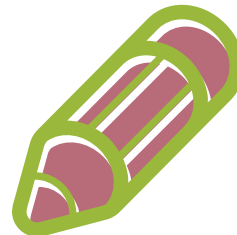
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: **Florida League of Middle Schools**

CO Sandy Wallace  
1409 San Rafael Court  
Saint Augustine, FL 32080



Do you have a story to share? We would love to have your input! Contact Terri Golden at [tgoldenhart@yahoo.com](mailto:tgoldenhart@yahoo.com) to submit an article for publication.