



Power Lines

December 2015

Florida League of Middle Schools

www.flms.org

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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

Letter from our Executive Director

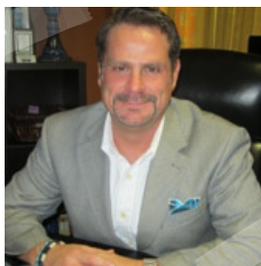
Why does anyone deliberately choose to work daily with young adolescents?

Stereotypes emerge from exaggerated characteristics that obscure the facts of individuality. A particularly harmful stereotype has long been associated with young adolescent children. In general it portrays these youngsters as rebellious, frantic, confused, irresponsible, inattentive, driven by obsessions about boy-girl issues. Instead, we must think of these variably developing children in terms of a period of several years during which the transition from childhood to full adolescents is accomplished.

Prevailing stereotypes of young adolescents have done enormous harm to educators' perceptions of students during this particular time of their developmental lives. Of course, all of them are not obsessed with sex, rebellious to adults, or uninterested in intellectual matters. Among the few accurate generalizations that can be made is that these children change immensely in a lot of ways during these years and that variability among them is common. Sweeping generalized definitions of who they are, how they are and what they care about should be treated with caution if not outright rejection.

These several years of a child's accelerated development in the transition toward adulthood are often confusing to parents and teachers. Relative consistencies and predictability from earlier times are no longer comfortably dependable. Activities that were happily shared in the past are less appealing to children. Their withdrawal from efforts to please their adults and sometime outright challenges to adult authority are upsetting. That these and other changes are confusing to adults is not surprising, so understanding what is happening and what to expect is essential to teaching and developing positive relationships with children in the middle years. While it may be farfetched to expect each teacher working alone to ensure these conditions for every student, I have seen that in schools or on teams where teachers embrace these propositions and work to achieve their fulfillment, remarkable accomplishments proliferate.

On a more personal note, I wish you continued success as you work with this very special age group. On behalf of the FLMS Board of Directors, I also wish you and yours a happy holiday season.



Educationally yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Frazier', written in a cursive style.

Steve Frazier
Executive Director

Talented Teaching Teams

by Cindy Harrison - Florida Virtual School

Samantha Cleaver of *How to Identify and Maximize Your Unique Talents and Strengths* states, “When Sherida Britt taught high-school English, her strengths were in providing instruction and designing curricula, not in creating bulletin boards and planning classroom projects. But when she noticed the warm environments that other teachers had created, she worried about her bare classroom and sought out other teachers’ help in sprucing up her room. Now, as a Director of Tools for Teachers with ASCD, Britt calls her experience typical. As teachers, we often spend time devoted to turning our weaknesses around when we should be focusing on what we already bring to our students: our own particular approach to the classroom.”

Many teams of educators believe the way to be a strong team is for each member to teach and perform exactly the same as all team members. Is this really the most effective way to achieve success for all types of learners? As teachers, we work towards analyzing each student’s individual learning styles, strengths, and needs, but do we invest time in evaluating our own personal teaching style and where we are the strongest in the classrooms? Steve Ritter of *Team Clock: A Guide to Breakthrough Teams* says, “For many teams, the most daunting challenge is their lack of a simple, common language that can help them analyze where they are and where they would like to be.”

As teams of teachers consider how to best reach every learner and every learner’s individual learning needs, they also need to consider their own strengths and how those strengths can serve the common good of the entire team and all students. For example, who on the team has a creative flair? Who maintains strong discipline? Who has a major grasp of particular content? Who is the organizer? Who is an effective problem solver? Even in light of the variety of personalities and temperaments, teams of teachers can work together to draw on each other’s strengths. The question is, how can the task be accomplished?

Take a team quiz. Ask yourself and your team members to consider:

Content: Who has strengths in particular content area skills? Are there different teachers who master one skill best where the group can work together for the combined benefit of the whole?

Courage: Who embraces challenging lessons and concepts and acts?

Optimism: Who consistently shows strength in making students feel successful?

Talented Teaching Teams

Results Oriented: Who is focused on reaching goals?

Creativity: Who is always thinking of new and interesting ways to present new lessons and lesson ideas?

Discipline: Who consistently maintains structure, routine, and organization during lessons?

Curiosity: Who is always exploring and discovering new information?

Collaboration: Who is the best team player in the group?

Fairness: Who is consistent in treating all team members the same?

Patience: Who demonstrates a need for understanding when presenting and considering new ideas?

As in the anecdote at the beginning, all teams need to work together and utilize each other's strengths not only for the benefit of all types of learners, but also for the benefit of creating a strong team. In the end, a team who supports each other and takes advantage of the resources right at their fingertips will succeed as a collective whole; as quoted by Ritter, "Together, we are dedicated to the education and development of the whole child." Working together as a cohesive team, we can achieve a high level of success for our students and ourselves.

Student Video Contest

Back by popular demand, the World of 7 Billion student video contest can help you bring technology and creativity into your middle and high school classes.

The contest challenges your students to create a short (60 seconds or less) video illustrating the connection between world population growth and one of three global challenges dealing with either Deforestation, Public Health, or Water Scarcity. Students can win up to \$1,000 and their teachers will receive free curriculum resources. The contest deadline is February 25, 2016. Full contest guidelines, resources for research, past winners, and more can be found at www.worldof7billion.org/student-video-contest.

Regional News

Region 5 "All About that Kid" Conference
Saturday, September 26
Burnett Middle School in Tampa

Our day began with Florida's Teacher of the Year, Diane McKee, as our keynote speaker. Diane McKee is a language arts teacher in Hillsborough County at Williams Middle Magnet, who spoke about how she raised the bar, literally, for her students. She has a bar that all of her students touch as they entered their classroom. She has realized that classroom content does not always hold the most value in students' lives. Instead, it's the ability to "light a fire so students crave the pursuit of knowledge, thus preparing them to be lifelong learners".

Teachers spent the remainder of the day attending break-out sessions such as Lunch and Learn with a Purpose, Visual Thinking Strategies, ESE Accommodations in General Education Classes, and 30 in 30, thirty apps and websites in thirty minutes to name a few. We had over 200 teachers from Hillsborough and Pinellas County as well as students from the University of South Florida attend and presented at the event. Check out our Facebook page to hear what is going on specifically in Region 5, you'll find us under FLMS Region 5, or you can email us at FLMSRegion5@gmail.com.



Regional News

Region 7 Conference Empowering All Learning Styles

Once again, the Region 7 Conference was a great success! The topic of this year's conference was Empowering All Learning Styles: What Is Your Superpower? Great Forces presented at our grand event. Our Keynote Speaker was Nationally Recognized Education Speaker Susan Fitzell; she supercharged us with her powerful and inspiring message emphasizing that all learners can be successful. Our superhero presenters ranged from a Grammy award winner to an outstanding Broward County Public School Instructional Specialist for Literacy. Music, Art, Technology, and Performing Arts were all part of the dynamic Arts Integration vision of the Learning Styles conference.

Whether the attendees wanted to go "Google" in their classroom, get "Flipped" with their students or learn how to create a student environment conducive for brain-based learning through music, they were able to experience it first hand.

Another superhero team of the day was the Silver Trail Middle School (STMS) Peer Counselors. They served to guide attendees and presenters throughout the conference with their superhero capes! The ambiance couldn't have been complete without the performance of the STMS Jazz Band directed by teacher and musician, Edgar Rubio. Our attendees not only had the opportunity to participate in innovative learning style strategy workshops, but also mingle with colleagues and learn about the various educational programs and organizations that are available to teachers and students. The power of individual Learning Styles was definitely in the air.



December Ideas

Here are some fun games to use during December:

Florida Snowball Fight

Required Items: White paper for each player or team.
Place a dividing line in the middle of the room. Players or teams will need to wad up the white paper and have a snowball fight. The player or team who has the least number of “snowballs” on their side after one minute is the winner.



Wreath Relay

Required Items: 2 players, 1 wreath (large), table
Teammates transfer a wreath using only their bodies from shoulders up from 1 point to another location.



Christmas

Would You Rather...		
1	have to loudly sing the chorus of Jingle Bells every time you walk into a room for a week	or have to wear a Santa suit to school every day for a week
2	make presents for your family instead of buying them	or make ornaments for your Christmas tree instead of buying them
3	not celebrate Christmas this year	or not celebrate your birthday this year
4	have Frosty the Snowman for a friend	or Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer for a friend
5	have mistletoe hanging in your bedroom doorway	or have a large decorated Christmas tree in your bedroom doorway
6	have Christmas tree tinsel for hair	or have fingernails that light up like Christmas lights
7	be at home on Christmas and get lots of presents	or go to Disneyland for Christmas but not get any presents
8	eat your cereal with eggnog instead of milk	or eat a candy cane sandwich
9	live in a giant gingerbread house	or ride on the Polar Express
10	Be allowed to only eat fruitcake for two days	or Be allowed to only eat candy canes for two days
11	write a five paragraph essay about the meaning of Christmas	or solve a page of Christmas-themed math problems

December Ideas

Shaving Cream Cap

Required Items: Shower caps, shaving cream, Cheetos
Put shaving cream on a shower cap and then throw Cheetos on top. Whoever catches the most wins.

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DECEMBER JOKES OF THE DAY

Where does a snowman keep his money? *(in a snow bank!)*

What do snowmen eat for breakfast? *(Frosted Flakes!)*

What do you call an Eskimo cow? *(an Eskimoo!)*

What did the big wooly hat say to the warm fuzzy scarf? *(You hang around while I go on a-head!)*

If athletes get athlete's foot, what do astronauts get? *(missile-toe!)*

Why did the reindeer get braces? *(Because he had buck teeth!)*

What do you get when you cross a sheep and a bee? *(a bah-bah humbug!)*

What did the ocean say to the iceberg? *(Nothing – it just waved!)*

Where do seals go to see movies? *(to the dive-in!)*

What do you get if you cross mistletoe and a duck? *(A Christmas quacker!)*

What did the snowman ride in the Tour de France? *(Not a bicycle, but an icicle!)*

What sits on the bottom of the cold Arctic Ocean and shakes? *(a nervous wreck!)*

Which elf was the best singer? *(ELFis Presley!)*

What do you get if Santa goes down the fireplace when a fire is lit? *(Crisp Cringle!)*

Why did the gingerbread man go to the doctor? *(he was feeling crummy!)*

Why was Santa's little helper depressed? *(He had low elf-esteem!)*

What did the Christmas tree say to the ornament? *(Aren't you tired of hanging around?)*

What did Mrs. Claus say to Santa when she looked in the sky? *(Looks like rain, dear!)*

2015 Board Members

Executive Director Steve Frazier Email: stevefrazier@browardschools.com	Chairperson Maureen Shankman Email: shankman.maureen@gmail.com
Secretary & Collegiate Contact Cheryl Ellerbrock Email: ellerbro@usf.edu	Treasurer Shirley Fox Email: foxss@earthlink.net shireynellfox@gmail.com
State Conference Chair Kathy Shewey Email: kathy.shewey@gmail.com	State Conference-Exhibitor Information & Historian Cathy Egley Email: jetski49@bellsouth.net
Region 1 Director Jeff Garthwaite Email: garthwaitej@bellsouth.net Jagconsulting1@gmail.com	Region 2 Director TBA
Region 3 Director Laura Hinds Email: Hlaura.hinds@stjohns.k12.fl.us	Region 4 Director Cathy Egley Email: jetski49@bellsouthnet
Region 5 Director Shana Logan Email: Shana.Logan@sdhc.k12.fl.us	Region 5 Associate Director Peter Megara Email: peter.megara@sdhc.k12.fl.us
Region 6 Director TBA	Region 7 Director Claudia Manjarres Email: Claudia.manjarres@browardschools.com
Florida Virtual School Director & Newsletter Editor Terri Golden Email: tgoldenhart@yahoo.com	Board Advisor & Conference Book Store Sharen Lewis Email: slewis9@comcast.net
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Board Advisor Paul George Email: pgeorge8@cox.net	Board Advisor Santo Pino Email: pinosa@comcast.net
Board Advisor Janet Spence Email: Janet.Spence@SDHC.k12.fl.us	Board Advisor Chet Sanders Email: chet.sanders@gmail.com

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: _____

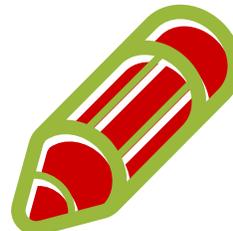
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

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 to submit an article for publication.