



## BEFORE HEADING TO THE MOUNTAINS OR THE BEACH...

Message from MSA President Henry G. Cram, Ed.D

Before heading to the mountains or the beach for rest and relaxation this summer, it is time to close out the current school year and begin planning for the new one to come. Time to assess progress and plan for changes that will make next year even better.

At Middle States, we are doing exactly this. We are taking our first measure of our new Strategic Plan initiated in January, and we are examining changes we can make to increase both the value and effectiveness of the accreditation process for our members.

Over the past year we have been evaluating the efficacy of the accreditation process and researching ways we can make it better. We have found that the schools that benefit the most from going through the accreditation process encourage authentic collaboration among the community's multiple stakeholders. They empower their faculty, students and parents by distributing leadership and by thinking systemically about how best to improve student performance.

We have learned that overcoming a school's bureaucracy – and the teacher isolation it creates – is critical to continuous improvement and advancing student achievement.

This shift, however, requires the development of a school's social capital, defined as collaboration toward the continuous improvement of the organization's capacity. Research has shown that social capital is a significant variable in student performance. Developing social capital requires a heightened awareness of its importance as well as training in the skills necessary to practice it.

This spring, before we head for the mountains or the beach, our team at Middle States is exploring ways to help schools increase their social capital. We are reviewing and revising our standards and protocols to put a greater emphasis on the elements of collaboration with the goal of enhancing school improvement.

We know these changes will make the accreditation process even more effective and of greater value to all of our members, and we look forward to sharing them with you later this year.

In the meantime, have a great summer!



Henry G. Cram, Ed.D

### YOUR MSA TO-DO LIST

#### 1. Set your school up for success next year!

Sign up now for workshops and trainings from preparing for self-study, to learning more about being an accreditation visitor, to completing your midterm report. Wherever you are in the process, Middle States is here to support you.

#### 2. Get out the vote!

Don't forget to vote for Middle States' newest slate of Commissioners. They are 40 education and business leaders from throughout the world that meet biannually to make accreditation decisions and review our organization's finances, policies and strategic plan. Look for your ballot to arrive later this month, and make sure that your voice is heard!

#### Also In This Issue:

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● Q&A with MSA Commissioner Marian Hobbie, Ph.D.

## MORE THAN 120 SCHOOLS EARN ACCREDITATION, REACCREDITATION

The Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools voted at its biannual meeting this spring to accredit or reaccredit 124 schools and school systems in 11 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and 15 other countries.

Among the schools that earned accreditation or reaccreditation are more than 20 Catholic schools and several learning services providers, career and technical post-secondary institutions and charter schools.

“One of the great things about Middle States accreditation is that it starts with an evaluation of what a school or school system is doing well, and essentially celebrates that good work,” said Middle States Commissioner Craig J. Tice, Ph.D. “Through the self-study process, schools and school systems collect input from stakeholders, including school leaders, teachers, parents and students, and use that input to create a strategic plan that is focused on continuous improvement.”

A full list of schools and school systems that earned accreditation or reaccreditation is available [here](#).

## SYSTEMS APPROACH TO ACCREDITATION ENSURES CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Congratulations to Apple Montessori Schools in New Jersey and the International Schools Group in Saudi Arabia, for earning accreditation using the Middle States Systems protocol.

Examining and evaluating schools as a system looks at the big picture and is a cost-effective approach to accreditation that helps ensure that the curriculum aligns as students progress from pre-K through 12th grade.



Apple Montessori Schools



Visiting Team to ISG

To learn more about the Middle States Systems approach to accreditation, [click here](#).

## HONORING THREE DECADES OF SERVICE

Middle States proudly salutes Leslie Green, manager of membership information, on her 30th anniversary with the organization. Leslie landed at MSA in August 1987, shortly after graduating from high school. She’s held several roles during her tenure and currently manages Middle States’ database records for all member schools, systems, and learning services providers in the United States and throughout the world. Most important, Leslie is a wonderful colleague and a highly valued member of the team.



“Over the last 30 years, Leslie has ensured the integrity of our data, tracked the accreditation history of our schools, and managed constant changes as schools close, grow, and merge,” said Director of Operations, Kelly Christian. “Her dedication to her work, institutional memory, and commitment to our team are just a few of the reasons our staff consider Leslie a rock of our organization.”

In addition to being a standout member of MSA’s staff, Leslie is the proud mother of three sons, the youngest of whom is completing his freshman year in college.



## MSA'S SUMMER READING PICKS: FROM BOOKS TO CHALLENGE YOUR BRAIN TO SUMMER BEACH READS

In anticipation of summer break, Middle States employees shared their top summer reading recommendations.

### FOR THE BRAIN

**"Born to Rise" by Deborah Kenny**

*"This book truly made me rethink and reorganize my teaching and approach towards students and education as a whole."* - Dan Rufo, Director of Accreditation

**"A Short History of Nearly Everything" by Bill Bryson**

*"If you're interested in science, but aren't necessarily adept at science lingo, this book is for you! Every time I picked this book up I was reminded what an amazing planet we live on and just how improbable our existence is."* - Kristy Lamoureux, Assistant Director of Accreditation Maintenance

**"The 50 State Border Crisis" by Howard Buffett**

*"The book discusses how the Mexican border fuels the drug epidemic across America. I am reading it because it is giving me another perspective on border security and drug cartels."* - Pat Imprevuduto, Accreditation Officer

**"The Power of Now" by Eckhart Tolle**

*"The book is powerful common sense. The past is past, the future does not exist yet, and the present is the NOW where you can act."* - Augusto Hernandez, Accreditation Officer

**"Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools" by Jonathan Kozol**

*"An interesting perspective on what we are doing and what we should be doing in public education."* - Irene Raatzs, Director of Volunteer Services

### FOR THE BEACH

**"What Alice Forgot" by Luanne Moriarty**

*"A woman falls and comes to 10 years older than what she remembered. An engaging and enjoyable read."* - Angela Rufo, Accreditation Officer

**"Red Sparrow" by Jason Matthews**

*"The author is former CIA and his imagination apparently was not stretched. The book was great and the other two [in the trilogy] are equally as engaging."* - Priscilla Feir, Ph.D., Accreditation Officer

**"Sleeping Giants (The Themis Files)" by Sylvain Neuvel**

*"A giant metal hand is found buried in South Dakota. What is it? Are there more pieces? What does it do? I don't want to say anything more and ruin the story, but this is a great mystery/thriller."* - Audra Chin, Assistant Director of Marketing and New Membership

**"Paper Towns" or "Looking for Alaska" by John Green**

*"Both coming of age stories and very easy reads."* - Emily Young, Assistant Manager of External Relations

**"The Wrinkle in Time" (quintet) by Madeleine L'Engle**

*"I really only knew the first book, one of my top five favorites from youth. It was great to be with Meg Murray, Mrs. Which, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Whatsit again. I then went on to read the other books in the quintet and fell in love again with the themes and messages of the entire series: the natures of courage and love, what is separate and what is part of ourselves, how our weakness can strengthen us."* - Jeanne Gallagher, Manager of Membership Billing

Happy reading and best wishes for a wonderful summer!  
Thank you for your commitment to academic excellence and school improvement.  
We look forward to working with you in 2018-2019.  
-The MSA-CESS Staff

VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE TO TELL US WHAT YOUR BRAIN AND BEACH READS ARE FOR THE SUMMER!

## Q & A WITH MIDDLE STATES COMMISSIONER MARIAN HOBBIE, PH.D.



*Marian Hobbie, Ph.D. served as a principal for 20 years, Assistant Superintendent in the Diocese of Rockville Center for three years and is currently serving as the instructional coach at Cristo Rey Newark High School and as an instructor at Holy Family University in the educational leadership program.*

*Dr. Hobbie has been involved with Middle States since 1988 and has participated in over 20 school accreditation visits. She has served as a Middle States Commissioner for the past three years.*

### Q. Why did you choose a career in education?

A. I actually didn't choose being an educator because I was planning to have a career in the business world. I had received a full college scholarship to the College of Education at Fairleigh Dickenson University and decided to take advantage of it by majoring in secondary business education. After I student taught in a high school, I was hooked even though my classroom was covered in spitballs for the first few days.

### Q. What do you consider one of the main benefits of Middle States accreditation?

A. When I was introduced to Middle States, I was impressed with the Plan for Growth and Improvement because it was my first experience with long-range planning. For me, that is a major strength of the accreditation protocol; the second is the in-depth school analysis through peer and self-review. The Program of Distinction designation is an added layer to accreditation for schools that strive to achieve a high-quality education for their students.

### Q. What advice do you have for someone entering the education field?

A. I have two pieces of advice for new educators. First, you have to walk into the classroom with the complete confidence and expectation that the students will do what you ask them to do. Students almost always respond well to a teacher who is confident and passionate about what they are teaching. Second, I congratulate any new teachers out there on entering the profession and assure you that it will be extremely rewarding. However, you must recognize that this is just the first step in your educational journey, because teaching is a lifelong learning experience.

### Q. Who inspires you and why?

A. My mom because she gave me three precious gifts—love, faith, and learning. She was raised in the mountains of Slovakia and came to New York City as a young woman, speaking only Slovak. Not only did she learn English, she taught herself to read and write in English. She was the model of a strong woman who worked hard for her family.

### Q. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

A. I love to spend time with my husband and family. One of our favorite times is enjoying a traditional Slovak Christmas Eve dinner. I also enjoy weekend getaways and taking pictures of nature, especially sunrises and sunsets.

## LEADING SCHOOLS OFFER RESEARCH-BASED TOOLS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Middle States applauds Grey Nun Academy in Yardley, Pa. and U.S. Senate Page School in Washington, D.C. for earning reaccreditation using the Sustaining Excellence protocol.

Under the Sustaining Excellence protocol, rather than complete a traditional self-study for reaccreditation, leading schools have the option to focus their time, energy and resources on developing, implementing and sharing an action research project for achieving their goals.

To learn more about the Middle States Sustaining Excellence approach to accreditation, [click here](#).



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