



## LET'S HAVE A BETTER SCHOOL YEAR, NOT JUST ANOTHER NEW ONE

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

Beginning a new school year is often viewed as a fresh start. It is often considered an opportunity for students, teachers, parents and even school administrators to close the book on the prior year and set new goals for the year to come.

But viewing a new school year as a chance to start over or as a clean slate misses the potential for meaningful growth based on lessons learned from prior failures and successes.

Rather than a fresh start, each new school year should be considered an opportunity to reinforce what we are doing well and to avoid making the same mistakes we have made in the past.

When I was a superintendent, and even now as president of the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools, my goal for each successive year is to discover ways to improve what we are doing by asking the question: "What can we do better?"

Whether from a student's perspective or the perspective of parent a teacher or a school leader, improving each new school year is a developmental process. It is not so much a fresh start as it is an invitation to do better. It is a time to build on what we have learned, to measure where we are, and to modify the course toward where we want to be. Meaningful educational goals cannot be reached with a succession of one-year plans that ignore the past, the changing conditions of the present or the constantly evolving future.

The major obstacles to continuous school improvement are our addiction to beginning again, our proclivity to jump on the latest trend and our belief in silver bullet solutions. These tendencies frustrate and discourage teachers, confuse our students and hinder their performance, and erode the school community's confidence in our profession.

Let's make this "new" school year the one in which we reflect on where we have been, commit to enhancing the great things we are doing, and change the things that are holding us back.

A new school year is not only a time to look forward but also a chance to reflect on the past and gauge our progress toward where we need to be.

Here's to a better school year and not just another new one.



Henry G. Cram, Ed.D

HAVE YOU REGISTERED  
FOR FALL 2017  
WORKSHOPS?

Check out the schedule  
and register **here**.

All workshops are free  
for members!

### Also In this Issue:

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## WELCOME TO OUR NEW COMMISSIONERS!

The Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools are made up of 37 leaders in education and business, representative of our diverse membership. MSA Commissioners make the final accreditation decisions, as well as oversee MSA finances, policies, and strategic planning. Please join us in welcoming the following new Middle States Commissioners:

**Nilsa Judith Gonzalez, Philadelphia, Pa.** – Gonzalez is the Chief Academic Officer for Camelot Education. Prior to joining Camelot, she worked for the Philadelphia School District for more than 25 years, most recently serving as the School Management Officer.

**Kevin McNulty, Pearl River, N.Y.** – McNulty is a teacher and Assistant Headmaster at Seton Hall Preparatory School in West Orange, N.J. He began his career in education as a teacher at Rice High School in New York, N.Y.

**Frank A. Preston, Spring Lake, N.J.** – Preston is the President of Advantage Career Institute Medical and Dental School in Eatontown, N.J. He is a former principal, teacher and counselor.

**Carol Ribeiro, Maynard, Mass.** – Ribeiro is President and CEO of The Virtual High School (VHS, Inc.) in Maynard, Mass., where she has worked in various capacities since 2001. Ribeiro has a background in computer information systems and her Master's degree in Business Administration.

Thank you!

According to our recent member survey,

97%

of our members believe that accreditation improves or maintains their school's performance.  
#MSApride

## MIDDLE STATES GOES TO WASHINGTON

Middle States leadership had a busy summer in Washington D.C., meeting with local and national education leaders to support our member schools and promote the role of accreditation in improving school quality across the nation.



MSA-CSS presented their Petition to the NACIQI Committee for renewal as regional gatekeeper for eligibility of non-degree granting, post-secondary institutions applying for USDOE Title IV programs.



MSA leadership sat down with Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, to promote the role of accreditation in demonstrating school quality rather than expensive and cumbersome federal and state accountability measures.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS!

We are happy to announce the recipients of this year's Susan K. Nicklas Outstanding Volunteer Award and F. Laird Evans Outstanding Volunteer Award.

These annual awards recognize dedicated volunteers who have advanced the mission of the Middle States Association to foster continuous school improvement through accreditation so all students receive the highest quality education possible.

This year's recipients are Teresa Corcoran-Tadley, Joseph C. Goode, Miguel A. Rosa Lugo and Paul Johnson, Ed.D.



Teresa Corcoran-Tadley – F. Laird Evans Award

Corcoran-Tadley has been donating her time and expertise to Middle States since 2006. She is a retired technology teacher for the Philadelphia Archdiocese and she has served on visiting teams for all types of schools. Always willing to take on a new challenge, Corcoran-Tadley has a unique ability to guide schools to successful goals with a sensitivity and grace that ensures schools respond, maintain their involvement in the process and find themselves in a position of growth.



Joseph C. Goode – Susan K. Nicklas Award

With over 20 years of experience in education, Goode has participated in more than 13 school visits on behalf of Middle States. He is an enthusiastic advocate for accreditation and inspires educators on his teams and in the schools to achieve their highest goals.



Paul Johnson, Ed.D. – F. Laird Evans Award

Where in the world hasn't Johnson gone for Middle States? Over the past 18 months alone, he has volunteered for visits to Uganda, Luxembourg, Sudan, Israel, West Africa and Kenya. Johnson is the former head of school of Rabat American School in Morocco and most recently served as the interim head at the American School of Douala. He is now retired and living in Italy. He brings enthusiasm, cultural understanding and professionalism to his service with Middle States.

Miguel A. Rosa Lugo – Susan K. Nicklas Award

Lugo's first experience with Middle States was as an internal coordinator for Academia Cristo Rey in Ponce, Puerto Rico in the 1980s. Since then, he has served on more than 15 visiting teams to schools across the island. He is passionate about improving education and a valued member of the Middle States team. \*\* Due to recent hurricanes and communication outages in Puerto Rico, we were unable to get a photo in time for publication. Our thoughts are with all of our member schools in the Caribbean during this time.

Susan K. Nicklas served as the executive director of the Middle States Commissions on Secondary Schools from 2002 to 2005 and was a member of the staff since 1993. She remains a dedicated educator, who views accreditation as one of the most effective forms of evaluation available to schools.

F. Laird Evans is the former president of the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools and an ardent supporter of school accreditation.

The awards will be presented the bi-annual Commission meeting in October. Congratulations to the award recipients and thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers who support the Middle States mission of continuous school improvement.

### INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH MIDDLE STATES?

Volunteers serve on accreditation teams that evaluate schools based on an established set of protocols and standards designed to reflect best practices in education. Our volunteers share a passion for improving education worldwide and making a difference for schools and students across the globe. If you are interested in volunteering with Middle States, ask your principal to submit your name or contact Director of Volunteer Services Irene Raatzs at [iraatzs@msa-cess.org](mailto:iraatzs@msa-cess.org) or 609.526.2975

## Q & A WITH MIDDLE STATES COMMISSIONER JAMES KRAFT, ED.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BERKS CAREER & TECHNOLOGY CENTER



*Dr. Kraft talks about how Middle States accreditation offers more than eligibility for Title IV funding and the important role of educators. He also reveals what's on his playlist right now and what was on his summer booklist.*

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

A. Both my parents were educators, and I entered college determined to not follow in their footsteps so I began college as a business major. I sold Christmas trees for my high school wood shop teacher in high school and college. When I came home over my freshman year break my former teacher pulled me aside and said he always saw me as a natural teacher. That was it. I changed my major to teaching Industrial Arts, now called Technology Education. I found my niche and never looked back.

**Q. How long have you been involved with Middle States and why?**

A. I have always associated high performing institutions with Middle States accreditation. However, it was not until I landed my present position as Executive Director at the Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) near Reading, Pa. that I came to understand the value of the accreditation process. We have embraced data collection and the need to use various assessment tools to assist us towards continuous improvement. It has become part of the culture of our work environment. Middle States affirms our commitment to growth and does so in a highly effective process. Since BCTC serves both high school students and adults, Middle States accreditation assures our students are receiving a high quality education. The results prove this fact.

**Q. What do you see as one of the main benefits of Middle States accreditation, especially for CTE schools?**

A. The first response most will hear is the ability to offer Title IV funding or financial aid to adult students. While this is true, in actuality, I value the continuous improvement process with reaffirmation that we are delivering a high-quality education as the biggest benefit for CTE schools.

**Q. Who inspires you and why?**

A. Our teachers and students inspire me on a daily basis. In a technical school, daily I observe the instructional process in 38 different technical programs. I see students apply what they learn, and I see how much they enjoy being in school. Often, I pause to take it all in and witness the next generation of the future workforce and realize the important role we play as educators.

**Q. What books are on your nightstand right now?**

A. I enjoy history, especially reading about people and situations that changed the world. I read several Bill O'Reilly books over the summer and have his latest on my "to read" list. His Killing Lincoln, Truman and Reagan books are intriguing works about American history.

**Q. What songs are on your current playlist?**

A. I like to listen to a variety of music genres. Currently, I am listening to Kenny Chesney's station on Satellite radio. I like listening to classic rock, country, jazz and even classical music.



**Middle States Association Commissions  
on Elementary and Secondary Schools**

3624 Market Street, 2 West  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

267.284.5000

610.617.1106

info@msa-cess.org

www.msa-cess.org

