



NEW ENGLAND LEAGUE OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS 37th Annual Conference Conference Strands

Conference Strands are designed to connect with current middle level best practices and *This We Believe* (AMLE).

A - 21st Century Skills

Middle level students must have the opportunity to develop the skills they need to be successful in the 21st century. Readiness skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and analysis must be included in all academic areas and provided in an innovative, creative, and challenging manner.

Topics in this strand may include, but are not limited to:

- Creativity and innovation skills
- Information, media, and technology skills
- Life and career skills
- Competencies
- Problem solving
- Communication and collaboration
- Analytical thinking
- College, career and life skills

B - Advisory and Personalized Learning

Middle level educators have been advocates for effective advisory programs for decades. Advisory combined with personalized learning plans; provide support for all students as they meet the challenges of academic and social development for the future.

Topics in this strand may include, but are not limited to:

- Advisory programs
- Developing student learning plans
- Community involvement opportunities
- Equitable access to programs
- Student engagement
- Teaming and collaboration
- Student voice

C - Assessment

Assessment in today's classroom provides a continuous, purposeful, and appropriate way of reviewing evidence of student learning. This information provides data to guide and determine specific teaching and learning strategies, that support and increase, not just monitor student progress.

Topics in this strand may include, but are not limited to:

- Designing and using effective formative and summative assessments
- Authentic and alternative assessments
- Portfolios
- Providing effective feedback to students
- Student-led conferences
- Standards-based assessment
- Connecting classroom assessments to State Standards
- Data teams
- Differentiated Assessment
- Performance-based assessment

D - Effective Leadership for Building and Systems Leaders

Effective middle level leaders are, first and foremost, knowledgeable and skilled at meeting the unique needs of young adolescents and implementing the appropriate and effective programs and practices. They set high standards, are collaborative, and provide leadership.

Topics in this strand may include, but are not limited to:

- Instructional leadership
- Leadership best practices & skills
- Data driven decision-making
- Organizing schools for success
- Professional learning communities
- Building positive relationships with all stakeholders
- Creating a safe and supportive school culture
- Developing and supporting teacher leaders
- Building support and advocacy
- Developing teacher leaders
- Establishing a climate for student success
- Community partnerships
- Parent community support

Instructional leadership

E - Middle Grade Students and Support Services

Middle level education meets the educational and developmental needs of young adolescents by implementing research-based best practices presented in *This We Believe*, *Turning Points 2000*, and researched developmental aspects of young adolescents.

Topics in this strand may include, but are not limited to:

- Brain-based methodologies
- Cultural competent staff
- Equity – closing the achievement gap
- Effective scheduling practices
- Creating physically/emotionally safe learning environments
- Creating safe and respectful school environments
- Inclusion
- Co-teaching
- Understanding the impact of poverty on learning
- Motivating the young adolescent
- PBIS or other school-wide plans
- Effective behavioral intervention programs
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Developmental guidance and support services

F - Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum

Developmentally responsive schools provide standards-based curriculum that is rigorous and relevant to students in all subject areas including unified arts and technology. Integrating unified arts and technology into content and relevant learning experiences that meet the broad range of interests, abilities, learning styles and skills of their students are keys to student success and school improvement. Incorporating literacy across all content areas in an ongoing, systematic, and planned manner is critical.

Topics in this strand may include, but are not limited to:

- Cyber ethics
- Interdisciplinary curriculum
- Curriculum mapping
- Curriculum design/implementation/assessment
- STEM/STEAM for middle level
- Aligning curriculum to Common Core State Standards and appropriate middle level practices
- Service learning
- Instructional accommodations
- Standards-based curriculum
- Team based instruction
- Project-based learning
- Hands-on learning experiences
- Higher order thinking skills
- Specific teaching/learning strategies
- Differentiated instruction
- Experiential learning
- Multiple intelligences

- Second language learners
- Technology integration and 1:1 technology
- Standards-based curriculum

G - Safe and Healthy School Environment

A positive school climate and quality, developmentally appropriate learning environment provides the young adolescent an opportunity for growth and learning.

Topics in this strand may include, but are not limited to:

- Safety and security
- School climate and culture
- Health and wellness
- Social skills development
- Student leadership
- School safety programs

H – Organizational Structures

Middle level educators design instruction that meets the broad range of interests, abilities, learning styles and skills of their students. They understand the importance of designing lessons that accommodate these differences by incorporating effective instructional approaches in their classrooms.

Topics in this strand may include, but are not limited to:

- Team based instruction
- Project-based learning
- Hands-on learning experiences
- Higher order thinking skills
- Using data to guide instructions
- Specific teaching/learning strategies
- Extended learning time
- Flexible schedules
- Inclusion
- Transition programs/opportunities
- Co-teaching
- Experiential learning
- Multiple intelligences
- Problem-based learning
- Second language learners
- Technology integration
- Standards-based curriculum
- Professional learning communities