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New England League of Middle Schools

# MidLines

## Why Professional Development?

by Jeff Rodman, NELMS E.D.

**R**elevant and effective

Professional Development is more important and necessary than ever. New brain research, expanding technology, understanding student performance data, and the need for effective leadership within our schools has made the necessity for professional development a priority. Yet, it is often overlooked.

According to the glossary of educational reform, professional development is defined as a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness as well as to maintain one's professional educator status. Professional Development usually takes the

form of attending a conference or workshop, taking a college course, working within your school or district as a professional learning community, or developed internally within the context of building or district needs and/or expectations. PD can also be

**"This year's conference is highlighted by keynoters Jack Berckemeyer, A.J. Juliani, and Scarlett Lewis."**

informal to include collegial meetings, peer observation, or independent reading.

No matter where it comes from, "effective" professional development improves teachers' skills. Administrators go from "administering" to becoming instructional leaders, and, in the "big picture" student performance in school improves.

The key ingredient in professional learning is that it has to be effective. Just as ineffective

teaching stymies student growth, ill-conceived and/or irrelevant staff development program stagnates teacher growth.

Professional development is important for all educators, across all disciplines, at all levels, no matter where one is in their professional career.

Each school year educational organizations, including the New England League of Middle Schools, offer teachers, administrators, and support staff a plethora of professional development opportunities. Each of these opportunities comes with an intended outcome or goal of improving student achievement or, as I would rather say, "achieving student improvement."

NELMS mission is that we are leaders in promoting middle level best practices by providing collaborative learning experiences that support

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# View from the Chair



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The NELMS Mission: We are leaders in promoting middle level best practices by providing collaborative learning experiences that support students' academic, social, and emotional growth and success.

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Publications of the New England League of Middle Schools are read by thousands of middle level educators. We invite you to strive with NELMS to continuously refresh the learning experience for young adolescents. NELSM only advertises products and services which serve the professional and educational needs of our membership.

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**H**appy New Year! As educators, we meet 2020 with a refreshed perspective for the second half of our school year, along with some goals we might have for our students and ourselves. NELMS has stepped-up with an outstanding menu of conferences, workshops, and school-based programs, which will serve as meaningful resources to give you the tools and skillsets you need to accomplish your goals. The highlight of our new year will be our Annual Conference, held at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, Rhode Island, on March 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>. Our keynote speakers this year include nationally recognized presenter, author, and humorist **Jack Berckemeyer**. Leading educator in the areas of innovation, design-thinking, and inquiry-based learning, **A.J. Juliani** will highlight with a presentation. In addition, founder of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement and advocate for social and emotional learning (SEL), **Scarlett Lewis** will be with us.

**Jack Berckemeyer** is known for his motivating, practical ideas communicating a message of hope, laughter, and insight into education. He began his career as a middle school teacher in Denver, Colorado. Jack brings his energy, humor, and expertise to all staff development as he helps teachers and administrators remember why this job makes a difference. Jack has presented in conferences and school district settings both nationally and internationally.

**A.J. Juliani** serves as Faculty for the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education (PLN) and recent Director of Learning and Innovation for Centennial School District. As a teacher, instructional coach, and administrator at all K-12 grade levels, A.J. has worked towards innovative learning experiences for schools in various roles. A.J. is also an award-winning blogger, speaker, and author of multiple books, including the best-sellers, *Empower* and *Launch*.

**Scarlett Lewis** founded the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement. Her son, Jesse, was one of the 27 victims of the Sandy Hook tragedy in December 2012. Scarlett decided to be part of the solution to the issues in society that caused the tragedy. She became an advocate for social and emotional learning (SEL) teaching children how to manage emotions, feel connected, and have healthy relationships. Scarlett promotes the Choose Love Enrichment Program, a no cost, comprehensive SEL program empowering educators and students to choose love. The Choose Love Enrichment Program has been downloaded in all 50 states and in nearly 90 countries.

Don't let this opportunity for professional growth and inspiration slip by! A comprehensive list of presenters and workshop sessions will be available on our website very soon! In the meantime, check out all our League has to offer and see where your next idea or inspiration might come from!

With gratitude,  
*Jason Webster*

## Editor's Desk



One year has ended and another has begun. In this issue we will reflect on the accomplishments of the past year and then view the programs in this school year. Our '19 Annual Conference was a huge success giving participants chances to network with colleagues from other schools and States and experience presentations on the latest researched-based pedagogy from experts in the field as well as those of their peers on what works in the classroom. The Scholar Leader Dinners in the various New England States celebrated eighth graders from many schools across New England. Parents, grandparents, teachers, and administrators accompanied these students as they were lauded for their academic and leadership skills. We had new schools awarded Spotlight School status. More about that later in this newsletter. NELMS, also, continues to offer quality workshops during the year. Please check them out on our website: [nelms@nelms.org](mailto:nelms@nelms.org)

At this moment we are organizing and preparing for our Annual Conference in Providence, RI, in March. More about that from our Executive Director, Jeff Rodman, earlier in this newsletter. As we are in the midst of the Holidays, may you take time to enjoy your families, recharge, and energize as you have a very important role in your students' lives. Their growth depends your commitment and dedication to their learning and growth.

Thank you for all you do for children. The public only sees the surface but we, as educators, know what a difference a competent and caring teacher makes in the lives of students.

Hope to see you at the Annual Conference!

*Brenda Sullivan Houle*

Feedback to Brenda - [bhoule@comcast.net](mailto:bhoule@comcast.net)

## Support your state organization!

These organizations are great resources for support, information about local events and issues, and advocacy opportunities.

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Middle Level Educators**  
[www.commle.org/](http://www.commle.org/)

**Connecticut Association of Schools**  
[www.casciac.org](http://www.casciac.org)

**Maine Association for Middle Level Education**  
[www.mamleonline.org](http://www.mamleonline.org)

**New Hampshire Association for Middle Level Education**  
<http://www.nhamle.org/>

**RI Middle Level Educators**  
[www.rimle.net](http://www.rimle.net)

**VT Association for Middle Level Education**  
[www.vamle.org](http://www.vamle.org)

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*Why P.D...continued from page 1*

students' intellectual, social, and emotional growth and success. This year, NELMS has more than a dozen workshops and an Annual Conference designed to provide middle level educators the skills to enhance and improve upon their practice. This year's conference is highlighted by keynoters, Jack Berckemeyer, A.J. Juliani, and Scarlett Lewis.

If we believe that we are committed to creating a culture of life-long learners, then we must believe the same is true for us as educators. Relevant and effective Professional Development is more important and necessary than ever. I hope that you can and will take advantage of the wide variety of professional learning opportunities that the New England League of Middle Schools has to offer. We look forward to serving your needs.



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## Gary's Technology Corner

For more than 30 years, I have considered myself a part of the NELMS community. I attended conferences early in my career. Later, as I was completing my degrees, I presented master's thesis and doctoral studies at numerous conferences. I served in leadership positions within the organization, and always found the community quick to challenge me to think more deeply and it accepted my challenges.

This "TechCorner" column begins with this confession as this will be my last contribution to this regular column. I recently accepted a position in instructional technology leadership in a community college, and intend to continue working with those vital institutions until I end my career. While I have written this column despite working outside middle schools in the past, this seems a good time to reflect on what I have learned from the NELMS community.

About 10 years ago, I gave a series of well-attended presentations at NELMS conferences focused by the theme "emerging technology trends." At the time, digital technologies available to school and technology leaders were diversifying quickly (a trend that continues, although it seems to have slowed compared to its rate back then). There are some trends I have noticed while writing this column and they led me to several conclusions about technology in our schools.

*Standardized educational technology restricts teaching and learning.* In many schools, we have finally accomplished the goal we set for ourselves when computers first arrived in schools. One-to-one schools ensure access to digital tools in schools. Unfortunately, those tools often restrict what is possible. Middle school educators understand the importance of "challenging, exploratory, integrative, and

relevant" curriculum, but when our students' creativity is forced into the limited capacity of a Chromebook, the richness of creations is limited. Don't get me wrong. Those devices are useful and effective, but when educators and students are not supported in their efforts to be sophisticated creators of information, school and technology leaders have failed them.

*Technologists and educators don't speak the same language.* I have met many wonderful and talented and caring technology professionals in my time. Most of them, however, are not educators. Technology professionals and educators do not use the same language, they do not see situations in the same way, and they do not solve problems in the same way. The design of effective technology systems in schools requires collaboration, and, in many cases, translation so they all agree on what they need. It is obvious and frustrating when I meet a school leader who has handed off all technology decisions to the technology leader. Those decisions have real and lasting influence on what happens in classrooms. Just as we do not want educators responsible for running networks, we do not want technology professional running classrooms through the systems they deploy.

*The best technology lessons are characterized by sound other than mouse clicks.* One of the most common questions I am asked is "How do you know if technology is being well-used?" The answer I give is to listen and watch. If you hear only clicks of mice (or buttons on touchpads) and you see students only looking at screens, the use is dubious.

Students engaged with technology in a lesson spend time talking, asking, reading, swapping devices (e.g. uploading images from their phones to use on other devices), looking at screens with furrowed brows in groups, maybe even laughing, and congratulating each other and criticizing each other.

Digital technologies are a permanent part of school infrastructure, operations, but most importantly, these are a part of technology and learning. NELMS is an organization that puts teaching and learning first. This is as it should be and as it always will be.

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## Spotlight School Focus Long River Middle School

Long River Middle School's vision statement closely aligns with the ideology of what defines a "Spotlight School". The focus is to provide a rigorous standards-based curriculum that promotes critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration. Long River Middle School (LRMS) is dedicated to providing students with effective instructional practices. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve 21st century learning expectations by offering a comprehensive curriculum which also includes unified arts courses such as STEM, Personal Finance, Digital Music, and 3D Art. There is an emphasis on depth of knowledge and application of understanding through inquiry, problem solving, higher order thinking, cross disciplinary learning, and authentic learning opportunities. These skills are highlighted in the eighth grade Capstone culminating project.

LRMS has an exemplary school climate. Our building is clean, attractive, and inviting and the learning environment is supportive and productive. Our school has embraced the flexible seating model in several classrooms; this provides choice about where our kids work and with whom they work. There are sufficient resources and staffing to support the learning for all of our students. Teachers advocate responsible and ethical use of technology in their classrooms. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards or New Touch Smart Boards. LRMS is one-to-one with Chromebook in grades six through eight. Teachers have been trained in the SAMR model to understand how to design empowering lessons. LRMS offers a variety of support services, as well as interscholastic sports and extra-curricular activities and clubs, some of which facilitate community partnerships.

LRMS also has a strong Advisory program that meets every Friday and provides an opportunity for every student to make a connection with an adult in our school to build a relationship and to establish a positive rapport with that individual in our building. Advisory lessons focus on positive peer relationships, kindness, and issues that address current topics that are trending with our youth.



## Congratulations to Old Saybrook Middle School!

Last March, Old Saybrook Middle School was awarded the designation of Positive School Climate Status by the Honors and Awards Committee of the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). This prestigious designation was conferred after a robust process, including a site visit conducted by six administrative team members from CAS who met with students and staff and reviewed evidence about climate which was collected and submitted by the school.

During the site visit, the team had a chance to tour the Middle School, speak with staff and students, and view various presentations regarding the school's climate. In their final report, the members of the panel remarked that they, "observed a dedicated staff who is committed to a shared vision of supporting the whole child through the adolescent years and making sure that every student is connected to an adult." The panel also commented on the quality of the school's various programs that help to build and maintain a positive school climate, such as PRIDE, Advisory, Unified Sports, and restorative practices.

"We are very proud of the work that the staff and the students have done related to a positive school climate. A school's culture and climate profoundly impact our students' ability to thrive and learn. Over the past several years we have created programming aimed at reinforcing strong relationships and connections to the school community, increased student voice and developed learning activities that our students feel they need to grow, succeed and to make Old Saybrook Middle School the best it can be," states Matt Walton, Associate Principal of Old Saybrook Middle School.

By: Matthew Walton  
Associate Principal  
Old Saybrook Middle School

## *Please Welcome the New NELMS' Board Members*

### **Dave F. Brown, Ed. D.**

I am an educational researcher and professor emeritus at **West Chester University** of Pennsylvania in the College of Education and Social Work. I continue to conduct research with young adolescents on issues of identity and their perspectives on effective middle level teachers and schools. I have authored numerous research-based book chapters and articles on effective middle schools and am the co-author of the book, *What Every Middle School Teacher Should Know* (Brown & Knowles, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.).

I hope to contribute providing and updating the meaningful professional development opportunities offered by NELMS as a recently added member of its Board of Directors. I would also like to be instrumental as a legislative advocate for NELMS, for middle level schools, and young adolescents throughout New England.

### **Jessica Kennedy**

I attended Westfield State University earning my Bachelors in English Secondary Education with a minor in Music. Additionally, I received my Masters in English Literature from Westfield State University prior to completing my licensure in Educational Administration through the Commonwealth Leadership Academy. I began my career as a 7th and 8th grade Language Arts teacher and became an Assistant Principal a few years later. I have been there ever since! I am passionate about education and working to be creative and innovative when working with my students. Recently, Westfield Middle School in **Massachusetts**, where I currently work, was awarded the Spotlight School Award. The NELMS Board has given me the ability to be inspired by other outstanding educators, schools, and ideas. I am so excited to have started this new journey with NELMS!

### **Chris Pollet**

I am in my 30th year working in public education and am currently the principal of Tyngsborough Middle School in **Massachusetts**. after spending my career prior in New Hampshire. I serve on the NHAMLE (New Hampshire Association of Middle Level Education) Board of Directors. A graduate of the University of New Hampshire, I have a CAGS in Public School Administration after receiving my Master's in Education. I have been married for 27 years and have two children; Natalie and Ethan. The most formidable years in a student's education and development happens at the middle school, a belief that has resonated with me. There is no doubt that students are who they become as a result of middle level education. NELMS offers me an opportunity to reflect and reach out to more teachers and more students and make the educational system that much stronger as a result of my involvement in this organization.

### **Adam Scott**

Adam Scott has been a middle school science teacher and coach at Archie R. Cole Middle School in East Greenwich, **Rhode Island** for the past 19 years. He holds a master's degree in Middle Level Education and Philosophy from Walden University and has bachelor degrees in both secondary education/general science and business management from Rhode Island College. He has taught pre-service teachers as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Rhode Island and has been a cooperating teacher for student teachers from Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island.

A past member of the Board of Directors for the Rhode Island Middle Level Educators (RIMLE.), Adam is proud to be the Rhode Island representative on the NELMS board and looks forward to working with educators from the other New England states in always remembering "the middle".

Adam has always looked for nontraditional methods to teach his students about the wonders of science and this has taken him to the training facilities of NASA, the pitch-black Atlantic Ocean on the University of Rhode Island's R/V Endeavor as a RI Teacher at Sea and to the icy deck of the Mt. Washington Observatory in the middle of winter. Going above and beyond to reach his students has always been at the forefront of his teaching.

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Adam has coached athletic sports at both the middle school level and the high school level but his true passion has been as a strong supporter of students with special abilities through his work with Best Buddies International and Special Olympics. As the faculty advisor and coach, Cole Middle School was named the 2018 Best Buddies International Middle School Chapter of the Year (out of 594 middle school chapters internationally), a 2018 Special Olympics Unified Champion School and as a 2018 ESPN National Honor Roll School. Cole Middle School is the first, and only, Rhode Island Middle School to achieve these extremely prestigious national awards. He is currently the head coach of both the Unified Basketball Team and the Unified Cross-Country Team at Cole and hopes that he can share his experiences with Unified Sports with everyone attending the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools National Conference. He was also recently awarded a 2019 WJAR Jefferson Award for Public Service for his volunteer work with his Best Buddies Chapter and Special Olympics Rhode Island.

### **Matt Walton**

I have had the pleasure of working at Old Saybrook Middle School in **Connecticut** for the past eighteen years. My career there started as a sixth-grade language arts teacher where I taught for eleven years. The past seven years, I have transitioned to an administrative role, serving as the associate principal of our school. The school houses grades four through eight and I have, truly, enjoyed my time working with the many developmental needs that this age range presents. I also serve on the Middle Level Board for the Connecticut Association of Schools and I am looking forward to my new appointment to the NELMS Board.

## *Innovative Practices*

### **Cultivating Positivity**

**By Becky Good**

**Physical Education Teacher**

**Noble Middle School**

**Berwick, Maine**

If you need a dose of positivity and lots of smiles to start your day, just join the parent morning “drop off” line at Noble Middle School in Berwick, Maine! It doesn’t matter what day of the week you choose or the weather outside, the morning crew will be there to greet you with a smile. The crew consists of principal Mike Roberts, School Resource Officer Fogg and PE teacher Becky Good. We asked Becky to share her story.

“It all began a year ago when I volunteered to trade in my lunch and recess duties for everyday morning duty. As the first couple weeks, I noticed that not everyone was as happy as I, so I got to thinking ...”How could I start their morning off on more of a positive note? What could I do to make them smile?” After all, good energy and positive vibes are contagious; I wanted to build the

momentum in our community.

I decided to print and laminate different smile emojis and mount them on paint stirrers. I found that by putting the smiley face in front of my face it would almost always elicit a smile from my “passers-by.” As the weeks and months went by, more and more parents and children arrived with smiles on their faces wondering what crazy thing Ms. Good would be doing next. The response I love the most is when a parent rolls the window down and says, ‘Thanks for making me smile!’

One morning a parent and her four passengers arrived holding emojis up in front of their faces giving back smiles. Our greetings then evolved from smiles to other funny emojis, big head cut outs, Wednesday’s hump day hat, rollerblading in Bruins attire, serving up hot chocolate and sometimes even having a real fire pit where we roast marshmallows for some of the lucky students being dropped off.

The smiles and the kindness kept spreading throughout the school year. One parent even nicknamed Friday as ‘Kind Friday’. He gives each of us a Kind bar as he passes through the line. Another dad would bring coffee and tea on Thursdays. It’s not uncommon that the three of us often get handed an occasional whoopie pie as well.

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**Hampton Academy's Oratorical Competition**  
**By Sharon Paster**  
Grade 8 Language Arts  
Hampton Academy  
Hampton, New Hampshire

Eighth grade language arts students are curious. They have strong opinions. They want to be heard. And eighth grade language arts teachers have a long list of Common Core State Standards that their students are expected to master. A speech competition, known as our annual Hampton Academy Oratorical Competition, provides an avenue of success that capitalizes on the various strengths of students while giving them opportunities to learn and explore critical reading, writing, and communication skills. Perhaps more importantly, the students begin to understand the importance of public speaking as a valuable means of communication in all aspects of life—if they cannot adequately communicate their message, then it will not be heard and understood.

To begin, students examine topics of interest to explore as they formulate several potential research questions. They read about each topic while using tools to practice media literacy and evaluation of sources. They examine primary and secondary sources and analyze and interpret information. They become scholars and ultimately choose a topic to develop into a research paper. Using a research management system, they take notes, organize information, create a bibliography, and outline their paper. Next comes the writing of captivating introductions with clear thesis statements, well-organized body paragraphs that incorporate varied sentence structure, transitions words, and precise language.

Next, they become investigators of public speaking. This includes the myriad of presentations they witness in school, TED Talks, plays, and casual conversations. They examine styles--eye contact, hand gestures, voice inflection, and posture. They manipulate the content of their research papers to best suit their style and incorporate meaningful gestures. They work on the sound of their voices, the strength of the words, the power of a pause. They decrease their nervousness and increase their confidence with face-to-face practice, video, and

facetime. They offer constructive criticism, debate the value of the finest points, and experiment. Listen to audio of their speeches and watch video without sound; in short, they become experts of their own communication.

When their time at the podium arrives, eighth graders have fine presentation tools to deliver the speeches about topics that they have researched, written, and adapted into five to seven minute formal speeches. And they are amazing. As each student presents at the podium, classmates watch and support with silence, keen interest, and body language that overflows with encouragement. When a student concludes, there is thunderous applause and genuine feedback of support.

Ultimately, two students from each class are selected by confidential vote by their peers and teacher to proceed to the next level of completion, a speech that will be judged by community members and former contest winners. The evening competition, live streamed and open to the public, concludes with trophies, awards, and well-deserved praise. Their topics are inspiring, humorous, sad, poignant, and reflective. They master a number of Common Core State Standards. Their greatest achievement, however, is their deposit in their bank of courage, knowledge, and communication.

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*Cultivating Positivity...continued from page 8*

Another school year has begun, and the smiles and waves are still going strong. Even the new 6th grade parents have jumped on board with the positive start to the day. "I couldn't think of a better way to begin my day."



Advisory Program-Tyngsborough Middle School  
By: Chris Pollet  
Principal  
Tyngsborough Middle School  
Tyngsborough, Massachusetts

An Advisory Program at the middle school level is a core value since the advent of middle schools and yet many schools do not have them for various reasons; not enough time in a school day due to mandates, previously ineffective programs in the school, reluctant staff or administrators, or even concerns that students will not take it seriously. As for Tyngsborough Middle School (TMS), it may have been a combination of the above but with the staff's observation of the continued social emotional needs of our students and the need to embed newly developed core values, TMS will embark on the voyage of advisory in our newly created "Community" block twice a week.

In 1989, a report from the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development highlighted the growing awareness among researchers and educators that adolescents who attend schools intentionally organized to create personal connections between students and staff are more successful both in school and later in life. The Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) recognizes that this is a key component of adolescents' education. In *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents*, AMLE states that "Academic success and personal growth increase markedly when young adolescents' affective needs are met. Each student must have one adult to support that student's academic and personal development." One of the most common strategies used to foster these important personal connections is the advisory program. NELMS has presented workshops on advisory and its importance for 30 years. It is clearly seen as a core pillar of a middle school and in the last 15 years high schools have followed suit by creating similar opportunities for its students.

During the 2018-2019 School Year, TMS undertook a process to address the social-emotional needs of our students and create a coherent set of core values for our school. The origin of our Community groups came out of professional development discussions during faculty meetings and after the creation of our Core Values (Respect, Responsibility, Originality, Perseverance, Collaboration and Independence). All this came

about as a collaboration with our student council and faculty. It is with this effort for all of our constituents that we have high expectations for this program to support our students.

We have developed this program with two meetings a week (Monday and Friday afternoon). During the 40-minute block, students will work on several different skills including presentation and organization skills along with participating in activities surrounding our core values. The Core Values Committee helped create a menu of activities surrounding the various topics throughout the year. Community leaders will be able to employ all or a few of the activities on each topic.

Our hope that in combination with our "What I Need Block", designed for intervention and extension, that this "Community Block" will help to meet the various needs of our students and allow students to develop through their three years into well rounded, caring, and able members of a larger community. Come visit and see how we are doing.

**Archie R. Cole Middle Schools Wins  
Three National Awards**

It is with great pleasure to announce that Archie R. Cole Middle School in East Greenwich, RI recently won three national awards for their work with students in Special Olympics and Best Buddies. At the 29th annual Best Buddies International Leadership Conference, at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, Cole was named the #1 Overall Outstanding Middle School Chapter of the Year, out of 594 middle school chapters across all 50 states and 46 countries.

There are close to 7000 schools across the United States with unified sports programs at the middle and high school level and only 221 have been named a Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools National Banner School and for the 2018-19 school year. Cole was named the first and only RI Middle school as a UCS National Banner School.

In addition, to those nearly 7000 schools, Cole was also named to the 2018 Inaugural ESPN National Honor Roll for the work with Special Olympic athletes and their Unified Sports Program. Only 30 schools across the nation were named to the ESPN National Honor Roll and Cole is the only school in RI, and only middle school in New England, to be named to this honor roll.

# Scholar Leader Dinners

## NELMS Scholar Leader Dinners

Each year, NELMS, along with each State Association, sponsor a dinner highlighting eighth grade student scholar/leaders in their States. This year NELMS celebrated its **Twentieth** Annual Scholar Leader Awards Banquet. Students are chosen by their teachers for academic achievement, consistent leadership among their Peers and dedication in their community. The following is a description of some of these events.

### New Hampshire Scholar Leader Dinner

The Twentieth Annual New Hampshire Scholar Leader Dinner was held on May 23, 2019 at the Double Tree by Hilton in Manchester. Seventy-eight students were recognized for their achievements. Oyster River Middle School's Band under the direction David Ervin provided music. Ms. Karla Salathe's students from Kearsarge Regional Middle School created the centerpieces for each table. Three schools were also recognized for winning the NHAMLE "I love my school because ..." video contest. 3rd Place - Hampton Academy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Richmond Middle School, and 1<sup>st</sup> Place - Pelham Memorial School. Congratulations and opening remarks were made by Christine Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, and Keynote Speaker, Sean MacDonald, WMUR. It was a truly amazing evening dedicated to celebrating our special NH Scholar Leaders and middle level students.

### Massachusetts Scholar Leader Dinner

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Middle Level Education (COMMLE) and the New England League of Middle Schools held their Twentieth Annual Scholar Leader Awards Banquet on Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at the Best Western Royal Plaza in Marlborough. Eighty-one Students, and their families, filled the ballroom accompanied by teachers, principals, and superintendents. Opening remarks were made by both students, educators, and administrators, most notably, Vincent M. Hayward, Principal, Norton Middle School and Jason Webster, Principal, David J. Quinn Middle School, Hudson. The keynote speaker, Randy Pierce, who lost his eyesight in his early twenties but continued to forge ahead to achieve the goals he had created for himself, even in the face of losing his sight. He emphasized independence, teamwork, and persistence in following one's dreams. Mary Jean Fawcett, Assistant Executive Director of NELMS, spoke about the Awards criteria. Students, then, received their awards and a picture taken by **Lifetouch**, the contributing sponsor.

### Vermont Scholar Leader Dinner

On June 6th, seventy-eight scholar leaders from across Vermont gathered together at Norwich University, with their families, for an evening of wisdom, recognition, and delicious food. They were reminded by youth speaker Lia Rubel of Spaulding High School, to make their own solutions and not to be afraid of being themselves and doing their "own thing." Youth speaker, John Fannon of St. Johnsbury Academy, stressed the importance of reading. The evening was filled with reminders and anecdotes of excellence. The future is promising. Both Maine and Rhode Island celebrated their scholar leaders with dinners in each of their States.

Well done, Scholar Leaders!



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