



## **Professional Development from the New England League of Middle Schools**

All of the professional development sessions below can be tailored to your school schedule, with half day and full options available, as well as virtual or in-person. All facilitators have extensive experience working in and running middle schools. The descriptions below give an overview, but NELMS will work with your school/district to ensure that our professional development delivers exactly what your educators and students need.

Email [tallen@nelms.org](mailto:tallen@nelms.org) to discuss your school's needs and pricing options.

### **Middle School Best Practices:**

#### **Middle School Scheduling that Optimizes Implementation of Middle School Best Practices**

Need help improving, rebuilding, or reimagining your schedule? This workshop is designed to assist school staff through the challenges that a school faces to create and implement a schedule that represents their beliefs and programs, as well as the developmental needs of the students. This workshop guides participants as they work to build a schedule around the unique needs (i.e. grade configuration, community values, shared staff) of their building. Scheduling can make or break your school year - let NELMS help!

Chris Pollet, longtime middle school educator and principal

Jeff Rodman, Executive Director of NELMS and longtime middle school educator and principal

#### **Young Adolescent Development: Implications for Middle Level School Design**

This workshop examines adolescents' socioemotional, physical, cognitive, and identity development behaviors, with extended time to compare new findings with behaviors that educators have seen in their own interactions with students. Topics include young adolescent cognitive development, the effects of social media and gaming, adolescent identity exploration, the root of stress for students, the effects of substance use, and the power of caring when it comes to helping students cope with ALL of this!

We then turn to how these recent findings should affect classroom procedures such as establishing rules, providing organizational strategies for students, handling student stress, strategies for encouraging greater cognitive growth, and appropriate use of technology to promote healthy social and mental health.

Dave Brown, EdD, educational researcher & author, who has published widely on adolescent behavior, including authoring a new book to be released in October (2024): *Young Adolescents and the Middle Schools They Need*.

## **Equity:**

### **Supporting Diverse Students:**

#### **Building relationships through connection, community, and solidarity**

As our middle school students diversify and change, our school's ability to support diverse students of all kinds is paramount to our success and our culture. This workshop presents multiple concepts and strategies of relationship-development that work for diverse students. Topics such as unconscious bias, tough love, building a third space, deep listening, and creating solidarity will be discussed. Educators will leave with a deep understanding of a framework which helps them develop self-awareness and deep connections with students from different cultural contexts.

Tim Allen, EdD, Assistant Executive Director of NELMS and former middle school principal  
Vilenti Tulloch, Founder and Director of the Academic Leadership Association

## **Culture and Climate:**

### **Caffeinate Your Climate:**

#### **Tangibly building and maintaining a positive school culture**

Building and maintaining a positive culture in the current educational climate can feel impossible. Thankfully, it's not! This workshop is for teachers and administrators and provides tangible ways to improve climate, culture, and morale in their school or classroom.

This will include a look at West Springfield Middle School's hallmark Amazing Shake program, which is modeled off of RCA's Amazing Shake. Learn how to teach and embed professional social skills into your school or classroom's existing programs while teaching students an important skill.

Pete Gillen, EdD, Principal of West Springfield Middle School and MSAA Principal of the Year in 2019

### **Fostering Habits of Work and Character**

In this EL Education model, student's character development becomes as equally important as mastering skills and producing high-quality work. Leaders and teachers will create and adopt a set of Habits of Work and Character. They will design rubrics, anchor charts, and other supporting documents that can be easily referenced by teachers, students and families. Teachers track student growth and mastery of these targets reporting out on them separately from academic proficiency. Students also regularly track their progress on these habits communicating individual progress to parents/guardians. In some situations, proficiency in Habits of Character and Work becomes criteria for eligibility and/or serves as additional positive behavioral incentives for students.

Jana Mates, Principal of Tripp Middle School in Turner, ME

## **Finding *your* purpose and helping your students find *theirs***

Without purpose, schools, educators, and students feel lost, unmotivated, and overwhelmed. This workshop will examine the concept of "purpose" and how it can improve teaching and learning. We will teach educators how to help students discover their own purpose and drive. We will also help educators remember what feeds their work both inside and outside of the classroom. The culminating project is the creation of a Vision Board (on paper or digitally).

Jessica Kennedy, former middle school teacher and administrator

## **Technology:**

### **AI: Revolutionizing the way we teach and learn**

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools has changed and will revolutionize the way we teach and learn. This workshop will examine the tools and functionality of AI platforms and how they can be utilized. We also explore the role that teachers must continue to play in evaluating resources.

## **Mentoring:**

Experienced Middle Level Leaders trained a Mentors promote middle level best practices aligned to the standards advocated by the National Staff Development Council, National Association of Elementary School Principals, *This We Believe*, and individual state standards for the six New England states.

Mentors:

- ◊ Build trusting, confidential, non-evaluative relationship with mentee
- ◊ Acquaint leaders with job expectations, responsibilities and district culture
- ◊ Build competence and confidence in those new to their leadership roles
- ◊ Identify strengths of leaders and build upon those strengths
- ◊ Listen to concerns and coach to extend reflective thinking toward problem solving
- ◊ Support and strengthen capacity to provide effective leadership

Chris Pollet, longtime middle school educator and principal

Robin Wilson, retired middle school principal