

A Message from the MIDDLE



Volume 9, Number 3, August 2018

President's Message

I hope that everyone is enjoying their school year. I have taught middle school for the last 25 years, and it is always exciting—there's nowhere else that I would rather be. Young adolescents never cease to amaze me with their energy, creativity, spirit and love for life.

Every year the Middle Years Council is proud to have our membership grow. We have just surpassed 500 people and hope to reach over 1,000 in the near future. If you know of anyone who could benefit from being a member of our council, please pass on our contact information (found on page 8.)

We are continually looking for new ways to support middle years teachers and for feedback from you to help us out. We are committed to making sure that you, as members, receive as much as possible from your membership in the Middle Years Council. Please let me know if you have any ideas to make your years in the middle better by contacting me at jeremy.spink@rdpsd.ab.ca.

We hope that you love being part of our council and that you have a great year "in the middle." I hope to see you in Banff in April.

Jeremy Spink

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Messages for MLAs

The Middle Years Council (MYC) encourages its members to seek support for resources that meet the social, emotional and educational needs of middle years students and provide appropriate classroom support. If you have a story about unmet needs in your inclusive middle years classroom, we encourage you to share it in your spheres of influence, including through a message or visit to your MLA. Send your stories (about one paragraph in length) to MYC newsletter editor Emma Holota, at holota.emma@gmail.com, for inclusion in our newsletter or on the website. Together we can raise awareness of the needs of students in the middle!

New Standards to Help Build More-Inclusive Schools

Professional Practice Standards

Since 1997, the professional practice of all Alberta teachers has been guided by the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS). Alberta Education has revised and updated the TQS to include a Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) and a Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS). These were signed as ministerial orders in February 2018, making all teaching professionals

accountable to the minister for their applicable standard.

The new standards will come into effect on September 1, 2019.

The full news release is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yct9l3cy>; to listen to the news conference, go to <https://tinyurl.com/ycfeo994>. Locate text for the standards at <https://tinyurl.com/yct9l3cy>. (Websites accessed March 27, 2018.)

What I know now is that asking for help

did not make me weak or less. It was hard.

Being in a tough situation made me more aware, more compassionate about the needs of others. Like many, I despise asking for help because it means putting pride to the side. However, asking was worthwhile.

Likely, you too have found or will find yourself in a heavy, burdensome situation.

My advice is to take care of you first. Ask for help. Accept help. Work on being better.

It is worth it—you are worth it.

Editor's note: the author has requested anonymity.

AMLE Affiliation

the future.



The Middle Years Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association is affiliated with the Association for Middle Level

Education (AMLE), which is the international organization for middle years educators. The AMLE website (<http://www.amle.org/>) has a variety of resources and information for middle years education. There is a free membership option so you can access some materials without the full membership. However, the professional membership gives you full access to all resources as well as discounts on books, resources and conference registrations.

The following is from the AMLE website (www.amle.org/AboutAMLE/AMLEataGlance/tabid/122/Default.aspx):

AMLE at a Glance

AMLE is committed to helping middle grades education.

Reach every student | Grow professionally | Create great schools

Mission: The Association for Middle Level Education is dedicated to improving the educational experiences of all students ages 10 to 15 by providing succeed as learners and make positive contributions to their communities and

Core Values:

Integrity: We practice the ethical, inclusive, and courageous behaviors that sustain an open and

vision, knowledge, and resources to educators and leaders.

Vision: The Association for Middle Level Education is the leading international organization advancing the education of all students ages 10 to 15, helping them to the world.

honest organizational culture.

Future Thinking: We are visionary and prepare for

Respect: We value human worth, dignity, diverse talents, and varied perspectives.

Collaboration: We seek active partnerships and shared leadership opportunities at the state, national, and international levels.

CORRECTION: "MYC Conference 2017 Review," which was published in volume 9, number 1 (December 2017), was written by Shauna Cunha.

AMLE Conference 2018

The 2018 AMLE conference takes place from October 25 to 27 in Orlando, Florida.

If you have the chance to attend, this is one conference not to miss. You will have the opportunity to have one-to-one discussions with leaders in education, network with teachers from all over North America, have technology explained and explored, and enjoy a variety of sessions in all subject areas.

Please check the AMLE website for additional information.

www.amle.org/annual/Home/tabid/244/Default.aspx



When Life Gets Hard ...

To say this has been a difficult year at our house would be understatement. It was that kind of fall, in which my family suffered one blow after another. You know the feeling—when you think to yourself, “Things can’t get worse,” and then, BAM!

Teaching is a stressful enough job when life is rolling along well, especially at the middle years level. Our students come each day with their own baggage and needs that teachers intuitively help with. I love my job, and I thrive on working with each student’s unique strengths and needs. But when I had to walk in with my bucket empty, I was forced to find ways to make work and personal needs balance. This is not an uncommon situation, one we will all deal with many times throughout our lives.

I have no great answer, no perfect algorithm to getting through these difficult times. Perhaps what worked for me may not for you. I do know I needed to look at those around me and ask for help. I had to put pride to the side and ask my coworkers to bail me out; I had to check in with my administrative team for their support; I had to lean on my dear friends and family; and then I really had to dig deep and see my doctor to ask again. I ended up taking a short but much-needed leave to get my life back into some semblance of order. I took to the gym, which has long been my “happy place,” and beat on punching bags until my fists were black and blue and my heart and mind were temporarily at peace. I searched out a great counsellor and talked through all of the roadblocks my family and I were facing until they became pebbles instead of boulders. I briefly became selfish until I could give my students what each deserved.

Life is cyclical, I think. We cycle through the good and the bad. At my house, we are cycling back to the normal that was. My family

and I are on track and the puzzle pieces have begun to fit back together. Not every day is perfect, and that’s okay.

Upon reflection, I have mixed emotions—most of all, gratitude. I am beyond lucky to work in a building with such supportive people, to have friends and family who stood unquestioningly by my side, to have the physical capacity to sweat out the stress, and to have the health benefits that allowed me to access a leave and counselling services that were integral to my health and well-being. Not all are as well cared for as I was.

MYC Executive Council Contacts

President

Jeremy Spink
Red Deer Public School District
jeremy.spink@rdpsd.ab.ca

Newsletter

Emma Holota
École Plamondon School
holota.emma@gmail.com

ATA Staff Advisor

Gaylene Schreiber
Bus: 780-447-9447 or 1-800-232-7208
gaylene.schreiber@ata.ab.ca

For a full listing of the MYC executive council go to www.ata-myc.com.



Facebook page

Please visit, like and follow our Facebook page to find out the latest information about our conference. The page is called the Middle Years Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA).

THE MIDDLE YEARS
COUNCIL WANTS
YOU!!!



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS
NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Join the Executive

We are always looking for volunteers from all over the province who would like to join the executive and promote middle years education. The executive meets five times a year; two meetings are via video conference and one is held at the annual conference in April. Please contact Jeremy Spink at jeremy.spink@rdpsd.ab.ca if you are interested in joining the executive.

Request for links, games, lessons or cool activities

Do you have any website links, games, lessons or cool activities that you would like to share with other middle school teachers? Send them to Emma Holota at holota.emma@gmail.com. We will include them in upcoming issues of our newsletter.

The MYC website is
WWW.ATA-MYC.COM.
Add it to your favourites.

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Middle Years Conference 2018

TEACH LIKE A PIRATE



School Tours: Various Calgary Middle Schools (April 26)

Date: April 26-28, 2018

Location: Banff Park Lodge

Friday Night Social: 9 Second Ride

We are asking for breakout session presenters; please see the website.

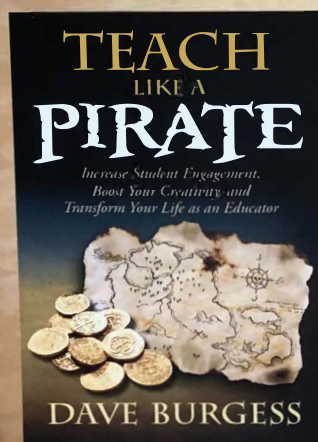


Banff Park Lodge



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dave Burgess



Scott Hebert



For more information, see our website at www.ata-myc.com/annual-conference.html or contact Tom Stones at tstones@cesd73.ca.

Please register @
www.ata-myc.com



The Alberta
Teachers' Association