



## MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION, THEN AND NOW

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

When the Middle States Association was founded over 130 years ago, the self-study process was designed to collect information from individual schools and compare it to specific sets of quality indicators. The idea was that if a school were meeting the majority of the established indicators, it must be providing quality education.

That model prevailed for decades until research conducted in the 1960s on school effectiveness identified the critical attributes of high performing schools. MSA later incorporated that research into the accreditation process and designed new self-study protocols to encourage continuous school improvement.

Today, information and student performance data are gathered for self-study and analyzed to create improvement plans that serve as a basis for making changes. Schools examine their current performance with an eye towards continuously improving student performance and organizational capacity.

With a long history in school improvement, MSA is again altering the focus of the accreditation process by offering members the opportunity to create and share quality educational programs through the Sustaining Excellence action research protocol and Programs of Distinction. By encouraging schools to design solutions to the specific educational challenges they face and share the results with the larger educational community, and by documenting examples of world class programs, MSA's new protocols have shifted the emphasis on inputs and outputs to the more fluid process of creating a quality education for every student.

In addition to helping our member schools continuously improve their students' performance and recognizing those that do, we also want to serve as a repository for proven practices. Our vision is for all schools to have the tools necessary to provide world class educational opportunities and attain the highest level of performance from their students.

In the coming year, you can look forward to expanded resources on our website describing the research our member schools are doing and the exemplary programs many have developed.

We encourage our members to use this opportunity to learn from our network of schools, to share your proven practices and to collaborate with our professional staff to solve the educational challenges we all are facing.

For more information, visit the member resources page on our website at [www.msa-cess.org](http://www.msa-cess.org) and check out some of the examples in this issue of our newsletter, *The Standard*.



Henry G. Cram, Ed.D

### Also In This Issue:

● More Than 170 Schools Earn Accreditation, Reaccreditation

● Record Number of Schools Awarded Prestigious Program of Distinction

● Outstanding Volunteers Honored

● Q&A With MSA Commissioner Kevin McNulty

## MORE THAN 170 SCHOOLS EARN ACCREDITATION, REACCREDITATION

The Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools voted at its biannual meeting this fall to accredit or reaccredit 173 schools and school systems in 21 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and 18 other countries.

Among the schools that earned accreditation or reaccreditation are more than 30 Catholic schools and several learning services providers, career and technical post-secondary institutions and charter schools.

A full list of schools and school systems that earned accreditation or reaccreditation is available [here](#).

## SIX SCHOOLS AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION

The Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools voted at its biannual meeting this fall to award six schools the prestigious Program of Distinction.



Academia Maria Reina, San Juan, P.R., School Counseling

The following schools earned a Middle States Program of Distinction:

- **Academia Maria Reina, San Juan, P.R., earned Programs of Distinction in World Languages and School Counseling**
- **Colegio San Ignacio De Loyola, San Juan, P.R., earned a Program of Distinction in Service Learning**
- **Mother Teresa Regional Catholic School, King of Prussia, Pa., earned a Program of Distinction in STEM**
- **Our Lady of Mercy Regional Catholic School, Maple Glen, Pa., earned a Program of Distinction in STEM**
- **Robinson School, San Juan, P.R., earned a Program of Distinction in Early Childhood Education**
- **St. Ann School, Wilmington, Del., earned a Program of Distinction in Early Childhood Education**



Colegio San Ignacio De Loyola, San Juan, P.R., Service Learning

The Middle States Programs of Distinction initiative provides external validation of an accredited school's accomplishments in specific areas of expertise and enables schools to take accreditation to the next level.

"I congratulate all six of these schools on earning a Program of Distinction this fall," said Henry G. Cram, Ed.D., president of MSA-CESS. "Programs of Distinction are meant to be models for other academic programs throughout the world, and this is an important accomplishment that each of these schools should be proud of."

The Programs of Distinction review process helps already accredited schools identify strengths and areas for growth and provides inspiration and recommendations for attaining a high quality program.

MSA accredited schools are eligible to apply for Program of Distinction recognition for outstanding programs in Global Literacies, World Languages, Visual Arts, Music, Early Childhood Education, Service Learning, School Counseling and STEM.

Learn more, [here](#).



St. Ann School, Wilmington, Del., Early Childhood Education

## MIDDLE STATES ADDS NEW ACCREDITATION OFFICER TO ITS RANKS

We are pleased to welcome **Timothy M. Sierer, EdD**, to the Middle States staff. Tim joined us last month as our newest accreditation officer. He comes to Middle States with an extensive background in education and most recently served as headmaster of a private Christian school located outside of Philadelphia, Pa.

Tim may be contacted at [tsierer@msa-cess.org](mailto:tsierer@msa-cess.org) or 267-284-5035. As always, the full MSA-CES staff is available to answer your questions and provide support.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS!

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

**Meta Cadugan**, a longtime educator and expert on teaching children with special needs, is a recipient of this year's **F. Laird Evans Outstanding Volunteer Award**. Cadugan retired as a teacher with KidsPeace in Allentown, Pa., a nonprofit organization that provides a psychiatric hospital, residential treatment programs and educational services for children with behavioral and mental health challenges. Since 2006, Cadugan has helped to evaluate more than 20 schools throughout the United States and Caribbean through the accreditation process.

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

**Charles Brozina**, a longtime educator and former librarian with Vineland High School, in Vineland, N.J., is the recipient of this year's **Susan K. Nicklas Outstanding Volunteer Award**. Brozina spent his career in public education, retiring in 2012 as a school librarian. He has chaired 12 accreditation teams as a volunteer with Middle States.

*Susan K. Nicklas served as the executive director of the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools from 2002 to 2005 and was a member of the staff since 1993.*



Chairs of the MSA Commissions, Dr. Louis DeAngelo and Dr. Michael Kuchar present awards to Meta Cadugan (top) and Charles Brozina (bottom).



The awards were presented at the biannual 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 KEVIN MCNULTY



*Kevin McNulty is a teacher and assistant headmaster at Seton Hall Preparatory School in West Orange, N.J. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Iona College and went on to earn Master's degrees in History and Educational Administration. He has been affiliated with Middle States Association since 1999 and currently serves as commissioner.*

### Q. How did you choose a career in education?

A. While working on my bachelor's degree I applied to several doctoral programs. I was thinking of becoming a college educator. After graduation I decided to put graduate school on hold and went to work educating young men in Harlem. I've been in several schools since in roles that range from teacher to principal.

### Q. How did you become involved with Middle States?

A. My first visit was back in 1992 and it was a bit of a disaster. The school was not prepared. Several years later my own school was going for accreditation. I had the opportunity to work with a lot of people from Middle States on continuous school improvement and planning, and found that I was excited by the process. To date I've been on at least 20 visits and have been visiting team chair for most of them.

### Q. What do you see as one of the main benefits of Middle States accreditation?

A. The peer review process. The school engages in a self-study before inviting peers to come in and take a look at what they are doing. Schools can learn so much in just a couple of days when peers serve as "critical friends." A strong visiting team can make suggestions that lead to significant improvements for schools.

### Q. Are there any school visits that stand out in your memory?

A. I visited a school in Pennsylvania where the student body was court referred, meaning that all students had at some point been in trouble with the law. The school was doing a tremendous job with kids with a range of abilities. They had students come to them who were high school age

but reading at a first grade level and doing math at a second grade level. The school's emphasis was on individuation. Teachers met each student at their level and moved them along at their pace. It was really inspiring to watch this school address challenges in a way that I'd never seen before.

### Q. Who inspires you and why?

A. This is a generic answer but it's the truth: kids inspire me. I'm inspired by their curiosity, willingness to engage and the struggles they overcome. I love coming to work each day and being able to spend time with kids. It keeps me going.

### Q. What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

A. Martial arts. I run a small dojo, a school for training in the martial arts. I have black belts in multiple styles of jiu-jitsu and in judo. I recently took up laido, the art of sword drawing and cutting.

### Q. What is one thing that may surprise people about you?

A. I love to study and have been surreptitiously completing my third master's degree in Jewish-Christian studies. Due to work and other commitments I have been taking it slowly. I complete one course at a time and it took me awhile to complete my thesis, but I'm happy to say that I'm almost finished with my degree.

On behalf of the entire team at  
MSA-CESS, we wish you a  
wonderful holiday season and a  
Happy New Year!

Please note that our offices will be closed  
December 25, 2018 through January 1, 2019.



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