



THE VALUE OF SERVICE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING BACK

A Message from MSA-CESS President Lisa Marie McCauley, Ed.D., C.P.A.

A year ago this month, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down much of the world and significantly changed our daily lives, including how we work and how we educate our students.

At Middle States, our staff quickly transitioned to working remotely and to developing a virtual or blended model for peer review visits so that school leaders could move forward with the accreditation process.

Since last fall, we have held more than 135 team visits and have over 140 visits scheduled for the spring semester.

We could not have achieved this without our dedicated volunteers.

Over the past year, more than 300 educators from around the world have volunteered their time and expertise to serve on peer review teams, which is a testament to the value of our peer review process.

It also speaks to the value of service and the importance of giving back.

For me, volunteering and service to the community have always been part of my life. I firmly believe that each one of us possess special gifts and that we have a responsibility to share those gifts so that we all come out on top.

At Middle States, through our Programs of Distinction initiative, we specifically recognize schools with exemplary service learning programs, and we also celebrate our volunteers through our annual volunteer awards.

I am pleased to announce that this year's recipient of the F. Laird Evans Outstanding Volunteer Award is longtime educator Marsha Aaronson, and the recipient of the Susan K. Nicklas Outstanding Volunteer Award is dedicated team chair Ed Tray.

I hope you will join me in congratulating Marsha and Ed, and in thanking each and every one of our volunteers for their ongoing contributions to helping all schools grow and improve.

Finally, if you are interested in volunteering to serve on a peer review team, please contact Director of Volunteer Services **David Sisbarro** at 267.284.5034 or dsisbarro@msa-cess.org.

Thank you, and I wish you all the best for a healthy and joyful spring.

Sincerely,



Lisa Marie McCauley, Ed.D., C.P.A.

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- Welcome Lorna A. Faires, Ed.D

MIDDLE STATES HOSTS PANEL DISCUSSION ON ACCREDITATION FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AS PART OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SERIES

As part of its ongoing Excellence in Education series, the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools last month hosted an informative panel discussion on accreditation for Catholic schools.

The event provided participants an opportunity to hear directly from Catholic School leaders about how accreditation has positively impacted their schools by helping them successfully establish and reach goals, develop a strategic plan, and provide the best outcomes for their students, while at the same time affirming the unique Catholic school educational experience.

A special thanks goes to Middle States Commissioner **Louis P. De Angelo, Ed.D.**, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Wilmington; **Sister Rose DiFluri**, assistant superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Camden, and Middle States Commissioner **William (Bill) Crist**, superintendent of schools for the Catholic Diocese of Syracuse for sharing their insights and their experiences with Middle States. To watch a recording of the event, [click here](#).

Middle States launched the Excellence in Education series in 2020 with a virtual open house for career and technical school leaders. The event featured two panelists from MSA accredited schools: Commissioner **Frank Whelan**, President of ASI Career Institute, and **Nicole Zernick** from Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center. To watch a recording of the event, [click here](#).

The Excellence in Education series is designed to provide information and answer questions about the Middle States accreditation process and becoming a Middle States accredited school.

NCEA CONFERENCE TO FEATURE SESSION BY MIDDLE STATES PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION HONOREE

This year's National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) conference will feature a presentation titled *Navigating UpSTREAM: Building an Award-Winning STREAM Program in Your School* by leaders from Our Lady of Mercy Regional Catholic School in Maple Glen, Pa.

Our Lady of Mercy's STREAM program has been named a Program of Distinction by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.

Leaders from Our Lady of Mercy will share valuable lessons about how to successfully build an award-winning STREAM program that is embraced by the community and integrated into a faith-based curriculum. They will also discuss the benefits of being recognized by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary for Programs of Distinction in STEM and how to leverage the recognition to further grow and improve their STREAM curriculum.

To register for the conference and access the session on-demand, [click here](#). The conference will be held virtually from April 6 to April 8.

LUNCH AND LEARN FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

The Excellence in Education series will continue next month with a virtual lunch and learn session for early childhood education schools and providers in Florida. Julia Musella, founder of BB International School in Florida, will serve as a guest panelist and discuss the value of accreditation with Middle States.

Middle States recently finalized a cooperative accreditation agreement with the Florida Association for Child Care Management (FACCM) and their accrediting body called APPLE (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment).



If you would like more information or have colleagues who might be interested in learning about the benefits of Middle States accreditation, including co-accreditation, please contact **Henry McCorkle**, director of global membership, at 207.751.3052 or hmccorkle@msa-cess.org.

LONGTIME EDUCATOR MARSHA L. AARONSON RECEIVES F. LAIRD EVANS OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD



Congratulations to longtime educator Marsha L. Aaronson for being selected as the 2021 recipient of the F. Laird Evans Outstanding Volunteer Award.

Aaronson has chaired peer review visits for Middle States- accredited schools around the world, including schools in the United States, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. She also served as a member of the International Schools Advisory Committee for Middle States.

With a career spanning nearly four decades, Aaronson has served in leadership positions at several schools in the United States and abroad, including the American International School in Israel, where she was head of school, and the Carol Morgan School in the Dominican Republic, where she was the middle school principal. She also served as a guidance counselor at the American Community School of Athens Greece and at the Community School in Tehran, Iran.

Q. Why do you volunteer with Middle States?

A. Audrey Hepburn is quoted as saying: “As you grow older, you will discover you have two hands. One for helping yourself and one for helping others.” The profession has given me a lot, and I feel like I have a responsibility to be involved. Every time I go on an accreditation visit, I come away knowing something I didn’t know before.

Q. You’ve traveled to upwards of 60 countries. Of all the places you’ve visited, do you have a favorite?

A. Every part of the world has something special to give if you keep your eyes open. I really haven’t found a place I didn’t like.

Q. What books are on your nightstand?

A. I just finished the *Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris, which was phenomenal, and I’m now starting *One Summer* by Bill Bryson.

ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER AWARDS

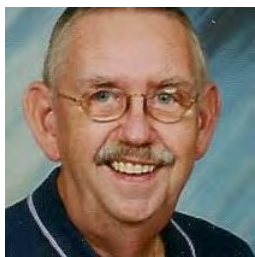
Presented annually, the F. Laird Evans Outstanding Volunteer Award and the Susan K. Nicklas Outstanding Volunteer Award recognize dedicated volunteers who have advanced the mission of the Middle States Association to foster continuous school improvement through accreditation so all students receive the highest quality education possible.

Volunteers serve on accreditation teams that evaluate schools based on an established set of protocols and standards designed to reflect proven practices in education.

F. Laird Evans is the former president of the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools and an ardent supporter of school accreditation. He served from from 1996 to 2010.

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

DEDICATED TEAM CHAIR ED TRAY NAMED RECIPIENT OF SUSAN K. NICKLAS OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD



Congratulations to dedicated team chair Ed Tray for being named the 2021 recipient of the Susan K. Nicklas Outstanding Volunteer Award.

Tray began volunteering with Middle States in the 1990s when he was a teacher at St. Stephen Regional School in Port Carbon, Pa., where he worked for 42 years. With a deep background in Catholic education, Tray has chaired more than 30 peer review visits over the past 15 years primarily for Middle States’ Catholic school members.

Over the course of his career, Tray coached multiple sports for the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and coached high school volleyball. He also served on the statewide CYO board and was a scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts of America.

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DEDICATED TEAM CHAIR ED TRAY NAMED RECIPIENT OF SUSAN K. NICKLAS OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD

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Q. What motivated you to pursue a career in education?

A. I was inspired by my high school English teacher. He was a really good teacher and had an excellent sense of humor.

Q. When you're not chairing team visits for Middle States what do you like to do for fun?

A. I like to read, and I like to travel. Right now, I'm reading *Split Second* by David Baldacci.

Q. What destinations are on your travel list?

A. I want to go back to South Dakota and Wyoming to see the wildlife. I'd like to go to the Grand Canyon and Mount Rushmore again. When I was younger I had a pop-up camper. I think my idea now is camping out in a nice hotel somewhere.

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WELCOME LORNA A. FAIRESS, ED.D.



The Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools is pleased to announce that Lorna Fairess, Ed.D., has joined the organization as an associate vice president for accreditation.

Dr. Fairess brings more than 30 years of experience as a New Jersey school administrator, including 15 years as the supervisor of instruction at Shawnee High School in Shamong, N.J.

She has also volunteered with Middle States for several years, serving as a member of the Domestic Schools Advisory Board and participating in multiple peer review visits.

Dr. Fairess holds a doctorate educational leadership from Rowan University and a master's degree in English from Rutgers University.

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Fairess to Middle States!

CELEBRATING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK



Saint Elizabeth School, Wilmington, Del.



Saint Michael the Archangel, Levittown, Pa.
Photo Credit Nancy Rokos



The John Carroll School in northeastern Maryland shares with us a **video** of their resilience through the pandemic.