



THE LAST LANYARD

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

One of the first things I did after arriving at the National Catholic Educators Association Conference in Chicago, Ill., last month, was to pick up my conference badge, which was affixed to a lanyard. As I placed the lanyard around my neck, it occurred to me that this would be the last time that I would speak at a conference in my role as President of Middle States.

In one of my recent presentations, I referenced a phenomenon that I refer to as my “Camelot” moments; moments in my career when I had the good fortune to work with incredibly talented individuals on solving challenges we were passionate about with an innovative solution. The almost decade and a half at MSA has been an extended Camelot moment and one that will serve as the capstone to my almost 50 years in education.

Throughout my career, I have always been a teacher at the core. What and to whom I have taught has changed, but making a difference in the lives of my students is what has driven my career. Whether they were my first students in Englewood New Jersey, graduate students at Rutgers University, teachers and administrators in Gloucester Township, NJ or the Valley Stream School District in New York, board members at Rancocas Valley, or most recently the 2700 members of the Middle States Association, it has always been about altering the path towards a brighter future. While I have no immediate plans as to how I will spend my retirement, I know I will always remain a teacher, if only to my grandchildren.

I have had the opportunity to visit wonderful schools around the world and have met outstanding educators, many of whom have become lifelong friends.

I wish my successor, Dr. Lisa Marie McCauley, and my colleagues who will be continuing the work of the Middle States Association all the best. Their role in ensuring the quality of education across the country and in promoting American education around the world has never been more important. And as members of MSA, your example of how every school can and must provide world class education for every student has never been so needed.

As I add my last lanyard to the hundreds I have collected, let me remind you that while we all believe in the future, and most of us believe that the future will be brighter than the past, it is having the audacity to believe that we can make a difference in that future that makes us teachers.



Henry G. Cram, Ed.D



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THANK YOU, HANK! MIDDLE STATES BIDS FAREWELL TO RETIRING PRESIDENT, HENRY G. CRAM, ED.D.

President Henry G. Cram, Ed.D. will retire on June 30, 2019, following 14 years at the helm of the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.

Prior to joining Middle States, Dr. Cram held a variety of teaching and administrative positions in New York and New Jersey, including 15 years as superintendent of the Rancocas Valley Regional School District.

Dr. Cram holds a doctorate in Educational Administration from Rutgers University and has served as a consultant on a variety of topics to school districts in the United States and in more than 30 countries. He is the author and co-author of numerous works, including two books.

“Dr. Cram has had a lasting impact not only on our organization but on educators around the world,” said Elementary Commission Chair Louis P. DeAngelo, Ed.D., who led the search for the next president. “His commitment to supporting schools and school systems on the path toward continuous improvement, his strong leadership skills and his devotion to his colleagues are a few of the things that set Dr. Cram apart.”

Dr. Cram will be succeeded by Lisa Maria McCauley, Ed.D., who currently serves as Chief Operating Officer for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and as Senior Vice President of Finance for Middle States Commission on Higher Education.



Dr. Cram and wife, Maria



Dr. Michael Kuchar, Secondary Commission Chair; Dr. Cram; Dr. McCauley; Dr. Louis DeAngelo, Elementary Commission Chair



MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION ACCREDITS, REACCREDITS 93 SCHOOLS

The Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools voted at its biannual meeting this month to accredit or reaccredit 93 schools in 17 states, as well as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and 10 other countries.

“I congratulate our newly accredited and reaccredited schools for their commitment to excellence and continuous improvement,” said Henry G. Cram, Ed.D., president of the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools. “Accredited schools are able to look beyond test scores and other data to make meaningful and sustainable improvement in student achievement.”

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

“Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.”

-Meredith Wright Edelman,
Founder of the Children’s Defense Fund

Although earlier this month we celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week at schools nationwide, here at Middle States we believe every day brings another reason to appreciate teachers and the incredible work they do.

Thank you to teachers near and far for devoting your career to shaping young minds, improving lives and making the world a better place.

ANNOUNCING MIDDLE STATES STAFF RETIREMENTS

Director of Volunteer Services, [Irene Raatzs](#), will retire next month after 17 years of service to Middle States.

Middle States relies on a vast network of volunteers for one of the most important aspects of our accreditation work: peer review. During her time with Middle States, Irene identified and recruited thousands of educators to serve on peer review teams and has worked tirelessly to ensure the experience is valuable for schools as well as volunteers.

“Irene has been a valuable ambassador for Middle States,” said Dr. Henry G. Cram, president of Middle States. “Her contributions have been critical to the success of our organization and to ensuring Middle States accreditation remains one of the most cost effective means for achieving accountability, continuous improvement and professional development.”

While Irene will be deeply missed, David Sisbarro has been appointed to the role of director beginning July 1, 2019. David joined Middle States in 2014 and currently serves as manager of volunteer services.

For questions about our volunteer program, please contact David at 267-284-5034 or dsisbarro@msa-cess.org.

Accreditation Officers [Pat Impreveduto](#) and [Jane Pruitt, Ed.D](#) are also retiring in June of 2019. Pat started with Middle States in 2011 after retiring as principal at Secaucus High School in Secaucus, N.J. Jane has been with Middle States since 2012 and previously worked as a teacher, assistant principal and principal with Worcester County Public Schools in Worcester County, Maryland.

Pat and Jane have been instrumental in supporting hundreds of schools and school systems through the accreditation process. They will be missed and we wish them both all the best in retirement.

If you work with Pat or Jane, stay tuned for an update on who will be your new accreditation officer.

Please contact MSA if you need anything in the meantime at accreditation@msa-cess.org.

As we prepare to close out another school year, we want to thank all of our member schools for their commitment to continuous school improvement.

From the MSA-CESS family to yours, we wish you an enjoyable and restful summer break.



We'll see you in the fall!



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

In March, representatives from Middle States presented at the 2019 National School Boards Association Conference in Philadelphia.



In “Achieving Excellence By Design: How to Create an Inclusive and Unified Strategic Plan for Your District through Accreditation,” our panel of presenters explained how an inclusive accreditation process can create a unified strategic plan designed to improve performance throughout a school district.

To access the handout from the presentation and learn more about how accreditation guides strategic planning, [click here](#).

Q & A WITH ACCREDITATION LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT: BARBARA MESSINA



Barbara Messina, Ph.D. a longtime administrator and accreditation coordinator for Catholic schools within the Diocese of Syracuse, N.Y., is the first recipient of the Henry G. Cram Accreditation Leadership Award.

Messina received the award during the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools biannual meeting earlier this month.

The award honors unsung heroes of the accreditation process who devote countless hours and energy to obtain and maintain accreditation of their schools. Recipients are chosen because they have strong belief in and deep understanding of the Middle States accreditation process and a track record of creating and maintaining a school culture focused on continuous school improvement.

Messina is currently the director of leadership development and mission effectiveness for the Diocese of Syracuse, where she has worked since 1997. She also served as internal accreditation coordinator for the Diocese during the time when its 22 schools sought and received accreditation. Messina earned her doctorate in Catholic Educational Leadership from the Catholic University of America and serves as a volunteer with Middle States during which time she has visited and worked directly with schools undergoing the accreditation process.

Q. How did you first become engaged in the accreditation process?

A. In 2012 the Catholic School Office of the Diocese of Syracuse made a decision to pursue systems accreditation. Approximately half of the 22 schools in the Diocese were accredited at that time. I was working as an administrator at a Diocesan high school when the superintendent asked me to join the Catholic School Office and serve as internal coordinator for the accreditation process. I didn't know what the job entailed, exactly, but I was excited for the opportunity.

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

A. The value of Middle States accreditation was immediately obvious to me. The provision of best practices that are embedded in the Excellence By Design protocol enable people to engage in a culture of continuous improvement. The process allows schools and schools systems to get in touch with themselves, understand where they are and where they want to be and then strategically plan how they are going to get there. I have friends in education in other parts of the United States that are working with other accrediting agencies. After talking with them it's clear to me that what sets Middle States apart is their focus on relationship-building. They meet teachers, administrators and other constituents right where they are. When I work with Middle States I work with people. They pick up the phone, we meet in person, they come out to visit. These personal connections are invaluable.

Q. What do you enjoy most about working in education?

A. I'm very committed to lifelong learning. I find satisfaction in taking on the challenge of learning something new and then reflecting back on the experience. My career allows me to work with students and teachers who are dedicated to continuous improvement and understand that we're never done growing and that there are always new things to learn. I am blessed to work with wonderful people.

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

A. Sleeping! I love to read and now that my graduate school work is behind me, I have some time to read just for fun. I also enjoy being outdoors, and try to get outside as often as possible once the ice and snow in Syracuse has subsided for the season. If I'm being completely honest, I also enjoy a little retail therapy now and then.

Q. What is the most interesting place you've traveled to?

A. I love the ocean and find it peaceful and calming. Next summer my daughter and I are planning a trip to Scotland. We're going to explore the Highlands and visit castles. My heritage is Scottish so I'm very much looking forward to it.



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