

SDAMLEmail

April 2020

Updates from South Dakota Middle Level Education

Board Bio of the Month

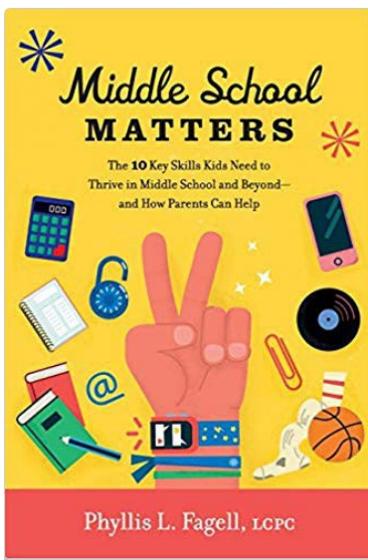
Kyley Cumbow is the middle school principal in Pierre. She has been a PE teacher (what a gig for a year), assistant principal, and now principal since 2002. She absolutely loves the middle school age and the staff that she works with. When teacher applicants turn the table and ask why Georgia Morse Middle School is good to work at, the answer is evident in the fun that is had every day. It is during times like we are living now that those crazy days and crazy kids are even more appreciated. She understands that middle schoolers may be the end to her one day, but they are what keep her going.



Kyley's other career is being mom to four kids ranging from Addison (16) to Vince (5). In between that, she has two boys 13 months apart that will be in 7th and 6th grade next year. She always joked that when they came to the middle school she would have to take a hiatus from her position but she has decided to give it a go. There are bets on how many times the Cumbow boys will end up in the principal's office together for behavior at school.

Kyley originates from the grand 'ole state of Nebraska but she has been in South Dakota long enough to boast that she is a South Dakotan. She enjoys working with all educators that find this middle school "stuff" their calling in life too.





SDAMLE Spring Book Study

Middle School Matters by Phyllis Fagell

Middle school is its own important, distinct territory, and yet it's either written off as an uncomfortable rite of passage or lumped in with other developmental phases. Based on her many years working in schools, professional counselor Phyllis Fagell sees these years instead as a critical stage that parents can't afford to ignore (and though "middle school" includes different grades in various regions, Fagell maintains that the ages make more of a difference than the setting). Though the transition from childhood to adolescence can be tough for kids, this time of rapid physical, intellectual, moral, social, and emotional change is a unique opportunity to proactively build character and confidence.

Fagell helps parents use the middle school years as a low-stakes training ground to teach kids the key skills they'll need to thrive now and in the future, including making good friend choices, negotiating conflict, regulating their own emotions, be their own advocates, and more. To answer parents' most common questions and struggles with middle school-aged children, Fagell combines her professional and personal expertise with stories and advice from prominent psychologists, doctors, parents, educators, school professionals, and middle schoolers themselves.



COVID-19 Resources

During this unprecedented time, educators are being asked to support their students and school communities while adapting to an entirely different way of teaching almost overnight. This can be especially challenging when working with young adolescents, who are already going through a transformative time of development. At the same time, we know the power of AMLE members to support one another and share resources that are working well to keep our students on track, both academically and personally.

Explore and add to AMLE's crowdsourced and curated resources for advisory and online learning. And don't forget to join us for an upcoming webinar or roundtable to hear from experts on a range of topics related to COVID-19 and share your own perspective.

[More details available for supporting middle level educators through COVID-19 available here.](#)

[Remote Learning Resources](#)

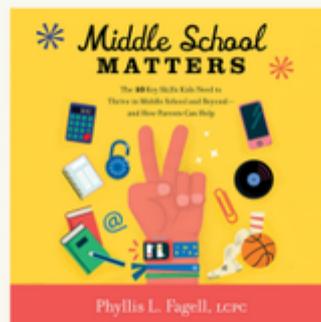
TWITTER #MSCHAT

Join us Thursdays, 7 PM CST / 6 PM MST to discuss relevant Middle School topics and a great easy way to keep on top of personal professional development!!

#MSCHAT

#MSCHAT

THURSDAY, APRIL 30
8PM EST / 7PM CST

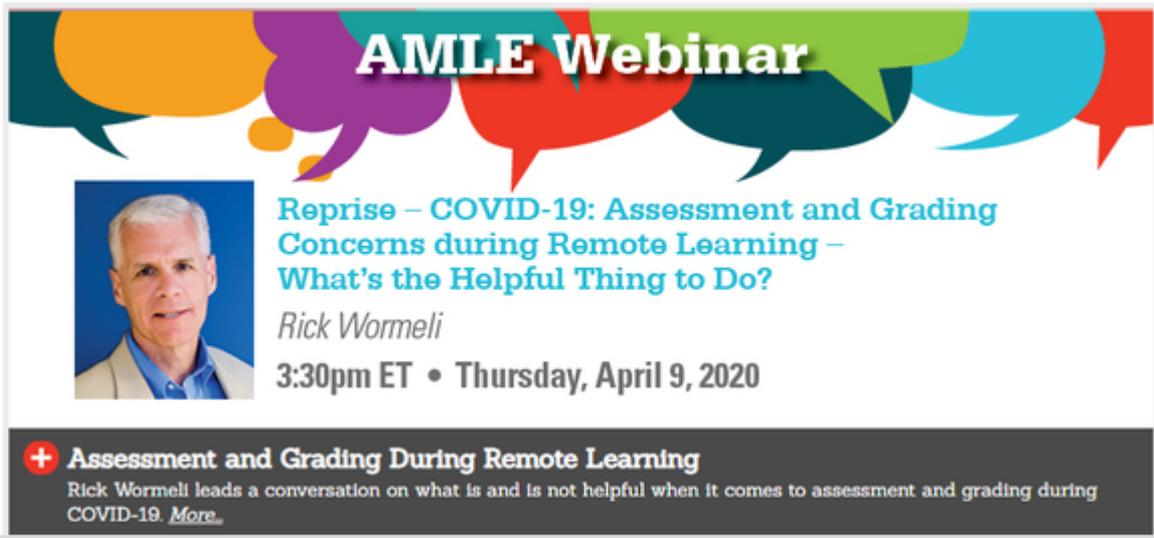


TOPIC: MIDDLE SCHOOL MATTERS
HOST: @EDSDAMLE

Join us for a fast paced 30 minute chat around the book Middle School Matters by Phyllis Fagell as we discuss how to help our kids thrive in the middle school years. And, Phyllis will be participating in the chat!

COVID-19 Related Webinars

Webinar



AMLE Webinar



Reprise – COVID-19: Assessment and Grading Concerns during Remote Learning – What’s the Helpful Thing to Do?

Rick Wormeli

3:30pm ET • Thursday, April 9, 2020

+ Assessment and Grading During Remote Learning
Rick Wormeli leads a conversation on what is and is not helpful when it comes to assessment and grading during COVID-19. [More.](#)

OUR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS STILL NEED TO CONNECT

Students Need Chances to Connect

Supporting students’ need for social interaction while physically distancing

By: Jen Cort

When asked about social distancing, Peter Slavin, president of Massachusetts General Hospital, put into words a thought I keep having: "I prefer the term 'physical distancing,' it seems we need social connections now more than ever before." For middle schoolers, with the developmental desire to fit in and seek connection with each other, this statement is even more prophetic than for adults.

The need to maintain academic instruction and to be socially connected collide when considering how we help our students connect when they cannot see each other in person. How we do this will probably change shape over the coming days, but we are aided by seeking the bright side and considering what we know of many students in the middle grades.

Middle schoolers see themselves in relation to others. As they try to understand and define themselves, many do so while comparing and contrasting themselves with others. COVID-19 provides a leveling of experiences as it impacts everyone, albeit in different ways.

Middle schoolers pick up on and respond to the expressed and unexpressed emotions surrounding them. A teacher once described to me, "middle schoolers all seem to be attentionally challenged." I can see how that may seem right. Still, I believe, middle schoolers are not *attentively challenged*, I think they're *overly attentive*, seeing everything, sensing the feelings of others, and driven by a desire to connect with others. I find them to be the most authentic group of people letting you know verbally or by action how they are feeling and how they experience you.

As we advance further into our time of physically distancing, the feelings of those around our middle schoolers may become more tense, anxious, and irritable, mirroring what they are experiencing. Among my favorite ways to understand how my students are doing is to ask, "What do you think adults should know about how some students your age might be feeling right now?" And "If you were to design a workshop for parents and teachers about how to best support students, what would you want them to hear?"

One of the most essential parts of a middle schooler’s day is the “times and spaces in between” meaning the times between classes and the spaces outside of the classroom. These times and spaces provide the connective tissue between classes and a chance to check-in, touch base, get information, and more. In fact, I once had a student tell me his relationship “began on Monday, ended on Friday, and was really intense in between” all of this while not seeing each other outside of school.

Remote learning and teaching through packets do not necessarily allow for these interactions, but scheduling this unstructured time is possible. Those teaching remotely might try starting class with

mics unmuted, allowing the chatter when arriving at class, beginning with a game allowing students to “play together,” or scheduling a hangout.

My students are coming back from spring break this week and for our first class will begin with a Google doc with the prompt "Please answer one or more of the following 'How are you?,' 'How are those you care about?,' 'How do you imagine others your age are feeling?'" and then we will play One Thing (one thing I noticed, one thing I heard, one thing I missed, one thing I ate, one thing wondered and so on) and for each class afterward, I am going to ask students to take turns creating a five-minute game for the group to play.

I began this piece with the intent to provide you with a list of things you can do to support students, but as I write it, I am reminded that the best answers about what kids need come from kids. The question, “How do we help students connect socially when they cannot see each other?” is not for us to answer; it's for us to pose to our students. We can ask our students to help solve a riddle perplexing most adults, co-constructing answers with them, and, most of all, listening.

My homework prompt, which can be done by remote learning, email, or phone calls, will be "Many adults are anxious to get things done, to teach you, to ensure you are learning, and I know that the brain is particularly challenged to take in new information when stressed. Adults often underestimate how important it is for students to maintain a connection with each other, so let's work together to generate a list of ideas for parents and teachers to read for ways they can support you to socially connect while physically isolating."

To process this question, we will have norms for how we collect each other's ideas, including listening for learning rather than debate, asking questions rather than disregarding opinions, and building on each other's thoughts rather than taking over. Students may not be able to answer the question for all, but in asking and listening, we are seeing and hearing them, which, after all, is the most robust social connection we can make.

Jen Cort worked as a counselor, principal, and senior administrator for 25 years before moving to consulting for schools on equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice. Jen is the host of a podcast called Third Space with Jen Cort.

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www.jencort.com

Recorded Webinars

Promoting Personal Wellness during COVID-19

[Promoting Personal Wellness during COVID-19 Slides](#)

[Recommended Relaxation Apps](#)

Promoting Personal Wellness during COVID 19

Stress appears in a variety of ways:

Physical	Emotional	Behavioral
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aches, Pains• Lower immunity• GI distress• Fatigue• Heart Palpitations• Blood Pressure changes• Change in eating habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weepy• Irritable• Irrational• Highs and lows• Difficulty self-regulating• Self-motivation weakens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dropping standards - often• Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or drug use• Decrease in responsibility, or respect shown



Leadership Roundtable: Responding to COVID-19

Leadership Roundtable - Responding to COVID-19



COVID-19 - Choosing the Right Remote Learning Resources for Young Adolescents



Join TIE in 2020 VIRTUALLY AND FOR FREE

Monday, April 20th

<https://sites.google.com/view/tie20/home?authuser=0>



Make sure you are taking care of YOU too

10 Tips to Stay Mentally Healthy

While school breaks and holidays can be fun and exciting, it can also be stressful for you and your family. Here are 10 tips for you and your family to stay mentally healthy.

1. Take care of you.

Remember that it's okay to take a step back to breathe. Make sure you are taking care of yourself by getting enough sleep, exercising and eating healthy. This also shows role modeling for your children.

2. Plan ahead.

Planning ahead can help reduce stress. We know going shopping or doing other activities can be stressful -- and even a little bit of a hassle. Try to schedule outings at times that don't interfere with normal meal and nap times and give yourself plenty of time to get everything done.

3. Try to maintain your routine.

Try to keep bedtimes and mealtimes on the same schedule. And if you have a yoga class or other activity as part of your routine, stick to it. Keeping with your usual routine can also alleviate stress.

4. Be mindful about changes in routines.

Holiday events and school breaks often do not follow your typical household routines. Being

mindful about deviations in bedtime routines, nap schedules, and mealtimes is important to help reduce stress. Be prepared with snacks, PJ's, and comfort items (blankets, favorite stuffed animals) to help make these changes in routine easier.

5. Talk to your kids about what to expect at functions and events.

As parents, we have an idea of how family functions and events will work. Young children don't have this same knowledge base and memory to recall these events from year to year. Save some time to talk with your child in the week leading up to holidays and school breaks about what specific family events will look like, who will be there, and what they may be expected to do during these times.

6. Practice for meeting new relatives.

It is likely your young children do not recall who certain family members are or how they are related to you and your family. If children do not see certain relatives often, seeing them again is similar to meeting them for the first time.

Practicing before the event increases the likelihood it will go smoothly and reduce your child's hesitation. For example: "Sally, tomorrow we are going to grandma's house and we will see a few other relatives there that are part of our family but you may not remember since we don't see them as often. They will want to say hi and ask you about school or an activity you like to do since they don't get to see you as often as grandma does. Let's practice answering a few simple questions and feeling comfortable with what to say."

7. Provide frequent praise.

If children are adapting well to a new situation and meeting your expectations, praise their positive efforts. Praise should not be reserved just for extraordinary events but used to help kids understand you appreciate their efforts and want them to maintain positive behavior.

8. Perfection ≠ better.

Your kids, family and friends won't remember if your house is a little messy. It's okay if you don't get to all the holiday activities you wanted to attend. But they will remember the laughter and the time you spent with them. So don't sweat the small stuff, and you'll be sure to enjoy the holidays more this year!

9. Take a break to give back.

Studies show that practicing kindness can increase your sense of happiness, and reduce negative thoughts and stress. And we have ideas for you to do! [Take the *On Our Sleeves* Acts of Kindness Challenge!](#)

10. Enjoy the season.

We know – it's much easier said than done. With all the rushing around, take a minute to smile about the batch of cookies you made with your kids (or in some cases, burnt.) Or take a moment to enjoy all of the decorations up in your home. Be present in the moment and enjoy.





**“You could say I’m a war veteran.
I’m a retired junior high teacher.”**



Georgia Morse Middle School is in its eighth year of hosting a regional acalympic competition (think brain bowl). It has grown from 8 teams the first year to 17 this last year. It is a great opportunity to give middle schoolers that is different than the typical sports and clubs. Our students have enjoyed competing both at our regional competition and other surrounding competitions including Chamberlain and Kadoka. If you have any interest in joining us in Pierre or to begin your own regional competition, please contact kyley.cumbow@k12.sd.us.



South Dakota Association for Middle Level Educators

Check Out Our Website

SDAMLE

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South Dakota Association for Middle Level Education is the professional association of teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders who have joined together to support the development of quality programs that serve the needs of young adolescents. SDAMLE exists to promote a better understanding of middle grades education in our state. SDAMLE is *the* source of ideas, information, and support for middle level educators in South Dakota.



Tweets by @EdSDAMLE

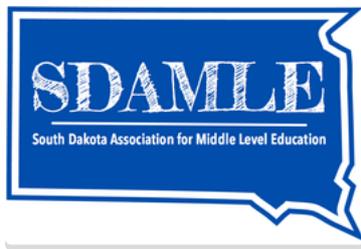
SDAMLE
@EdSDAMLE
Thank you for being a part of #sdedchat! So grateful for each and every one of you.
Mar 12, 2019

SDAMLE
@EdSDAMLE

2018-2019 SDAMLE Board Members

Left to Right--Taylor Hamblin, Lisa Kissner, Kyley Cumbow, Teri Bauerly, Sherri Nelson, Reva Potter, Todd Brist, Steve Gors, and Tara Johanneson





SDAMLE

Facebook @EdSDAMLE

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2019-2020 SDAMLE Board Members

President: Kiley Cumbow, Georgia Morse Middle School
Treasurer: Lisa Kissner, Huron Middle School
Secretary: Tara Johanneson, O'Gorman Junior High
Membership Coordinator: Reva Potter, Belle Fourche Middle School
Past President: Todd Brist, Watertown Middle School
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University Representative: Teri Bauerly, Black Hills State University

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Upcoming Events!



#AMLE20
November 12–14, 2020
National Harbor, MD

*The World's Largest
Middle School Conference*

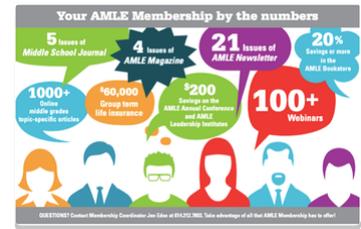


[Click here for information about The World's Largest Middle School Conference!](#)

Association for Middle Level Education

You are a passionate middle grades educator.

You appreciate the uniqueness of every student in your classroom. You advocate for your students every day while helping them along their individual path to achievement. You chose the middle grades because you understand the impact one teacher can make on the lives of 10 to 15 year olds. ***You are AMLE!***



AMLE Membership Information:

<http://www.ample.org/membership.aspx>

