

# SDAMLEmail October 2019

Updates from South Dakota Middle Level Education

## SDAMLE Fall Book Study

*The Power of the Adolescent Brain* by Thomas Armstrong

BEGINS OCTOBER 21st! Contact [kyley.cumbow@k12.sd.us](mailto:kyley.cumbow@k12.sd.us) if you would like to participate in this book study.

Moody. Reckless. Impractical. Insecure. Distracted.

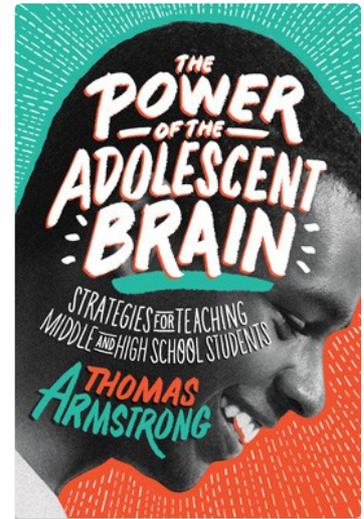
These are all words commonly used to describe adolescents. But what if we recast these traits in a positive light? Teens possess insight, passion, idealism, sensitivity, and creativity in abundance—all qualities that can make a significant positive contribution to society.

In this thought-provoking book, Thomas Armstrong looks at the power and promise of the teenage brain from an empathetic, strength-based perspective, and describes what middle and high school educators can do to make the most of their students' potential.

Thoroughly grounded in current neurological research, the book explains what we know about how the adolescent brain works and proposes eight essential instructional elements that will help students develop the ability to think, make healthy choices, regulate their emotions, handle social conflict, consolidate their identities, and learn enough about the world to move into adulthood with dignity and grace.

Armstrong provides practical strategies and real-life examples from schools that illustrate these eight key practices in action. In addition, you'll find a glossary of brain terms, a selection of brain-friendly lesson plans across the content areas, and a list of resources to support and extend the book's ideas and practices.

There is a colossal mismatch between how the adolescent brain has evolved and the passive, rote learning experiences that are all too often provided at the secondary level. See the amazing difference—in school and beyond—when you use the insights from this book to help students tap into the power of their changing brains.



## Course Information

Expectations for each discussion week will be to read the book and post your own response in Google Classroom and then respond to at least three of your colleagues. Basically, we will get more out of this book if we DISCUSS it together. Your initial response should be posted no later than Wednesday and your responses to colleagues finished no later than Saturday. Our discussion will wrap up on Sunday of the week so we can all prepare for the next week's chapter(s). Our first discussion will revolve around the first two chapters in our book.

The breakdown of chapters will be:

- Week of October 1- Chapter 1 and 2
- Week of October 28- Chapter 3
- Week of November 4- Chapter 4
- Week of November 11- Chapter 5
- Week of November 18- Chapter 6
- Week of December 2- Chapter 7
- Week of December 9- Chapter 8
- Week of December 16- Chapter 9
- Week of December 30- Chapter 10 and conclusion
- Week of January 6- Final discussion and reflection paper



Book Study USF Registration Information.pdf

 Download  
135.2 KB

## #MSCHAT

The members of [@EdSDAMLE](#) are hosting this week's [#mschat](#) on the adolescent brain.

**Join us Thursday, October 17th at 7 PM CST / 6 PM MST!**



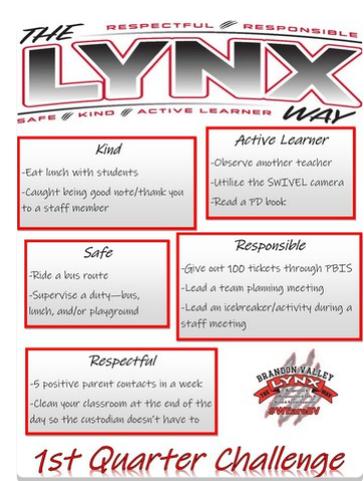
## What's Cool In Our Schools!

### Our Way, the LYNX Way – BVIS Staff Challenge

This year at Brandon Valley Intermediate School, we added a staff component to the district wide LYNX Way. As a staff, we teach, model, and reinforce the Brandon Valley LYNX Way expectations – Respectful, Responsible, Active Learner, Kind, and Safe, to students throughout the year. With a continued growth mindset as an administrator, I wanted to implement a way to challenge staff professionally, continue to build school culture, and demonstrate the same expectations we have for our students. This also allowed me, as an administrator, to develop tasks that can aid in individual staff professional development, parent communication, personal reflection on teaching, student focus/needs, and reinforcing the LYNX Way to students. I want students in our building to see that the

staff also demonstrates these same expectations throughout their day. So the "Quarter LYNX Way challenge" was born. Each quarter staff are members are challenged with different tasks under each expectation, such as:

- **Kind:** Eating lunch with a student
- **Active Learner:** Observe another teacher
- **Safe:** Ride a bus route
- **Responsible:** Give out 100 tickets through PBIS rewards
- **Respectful:** 5 positive parent contacts in a week



When teachers complete a challenge item, they fill out a Google form to record the task they accomplished. The administration then puts a LYNX Way sticker in their classroom window. Currently, we have over 150 challenge items completed by staff in six weeks. It has been rewarding to see positive outcomes from this newly implemented staff LYNX Way challenge. I hope this staff challenge continues to evolve and enhance the positive school environment already established at BVIS.

*Nick Skibsted*

Principal

Brandon Valley Intermediate School

## Tara's Tech Tip

### Extra! Extra! Google now allows file editing in native apps!

Using Google File Stream, you now have the ability to edit documents (Word), spreadsheets (Excel), and presentations (PowerPoints) in their native Microsoft formats! This means that the process of doing conversions from Word to Google Suite products is no longer required for editing.

1. Figure 1: Download Google Drive File Stream (this will show up as a new Drive option on your computer). The download option for this can be found in the settings menu (gear in the top right-hand corner) in Google Drive.
2. Figure 2: Open up the file from the location that it can be found in Google Drive.
3. Figure 3: The file will open in its native application. In this example, it is Microsoft Word. You will see in the bottom right-hand corner that there is a notification box from Google which will identify if the document is safe to edit or if collaborators are also working with the file.
4. Figure 4: Make any edits that you want, chose "save" when closing, and the file will update both in Google File Stream and on the original file that is found on Google Drive.

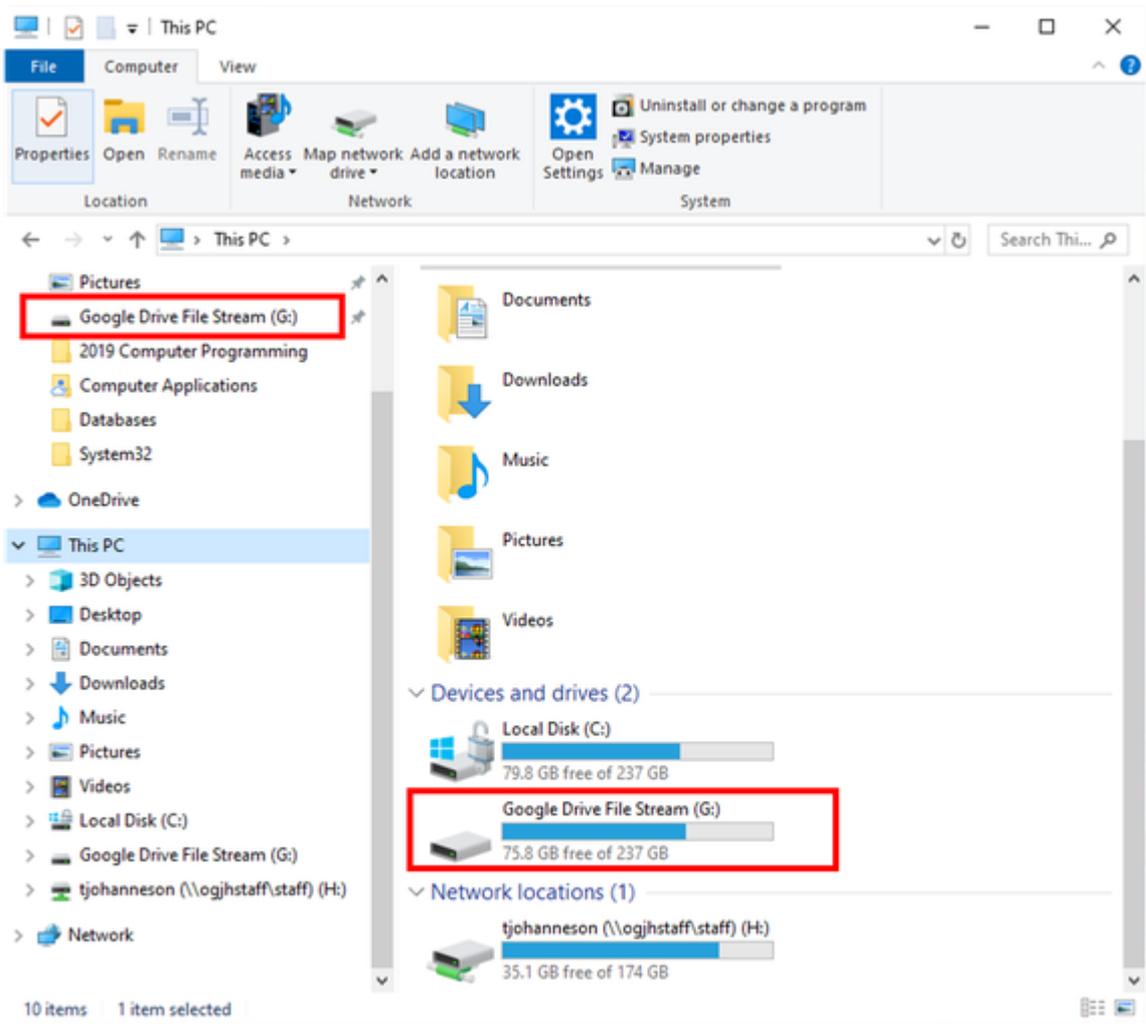


Figure 1

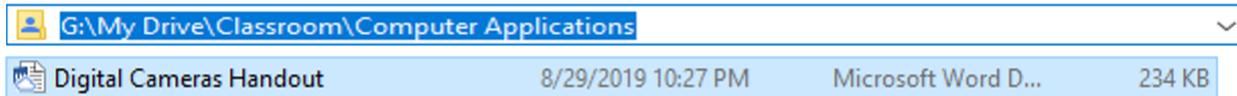


Figure 2

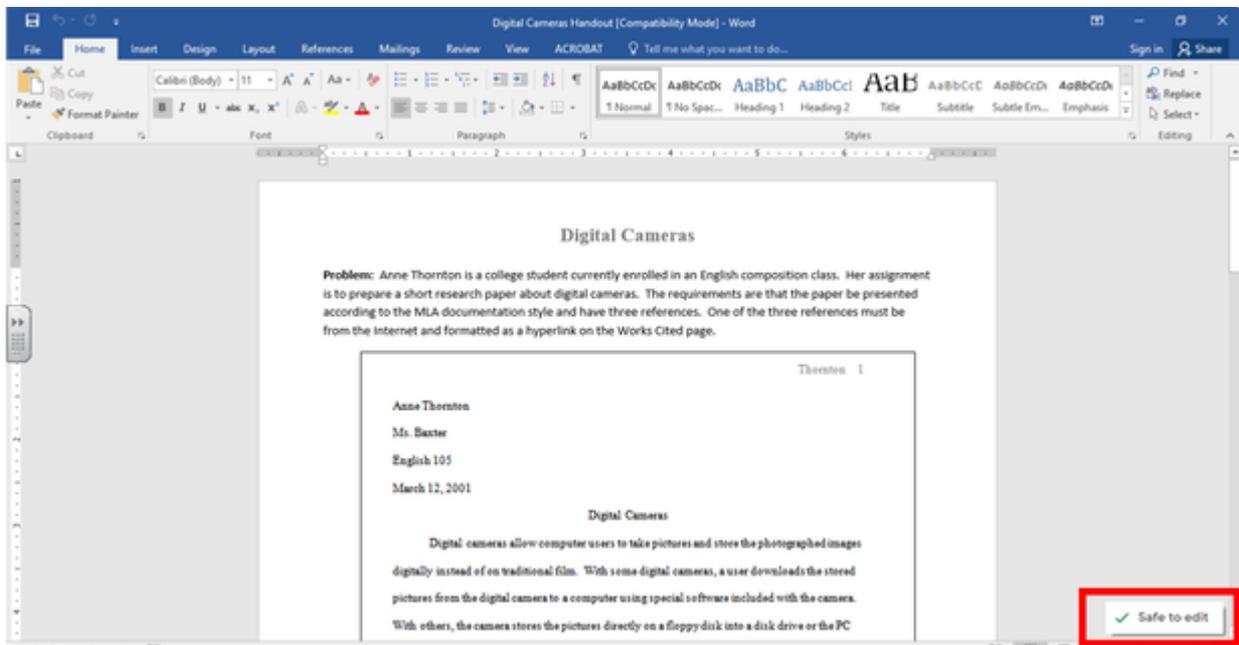


Figure 3

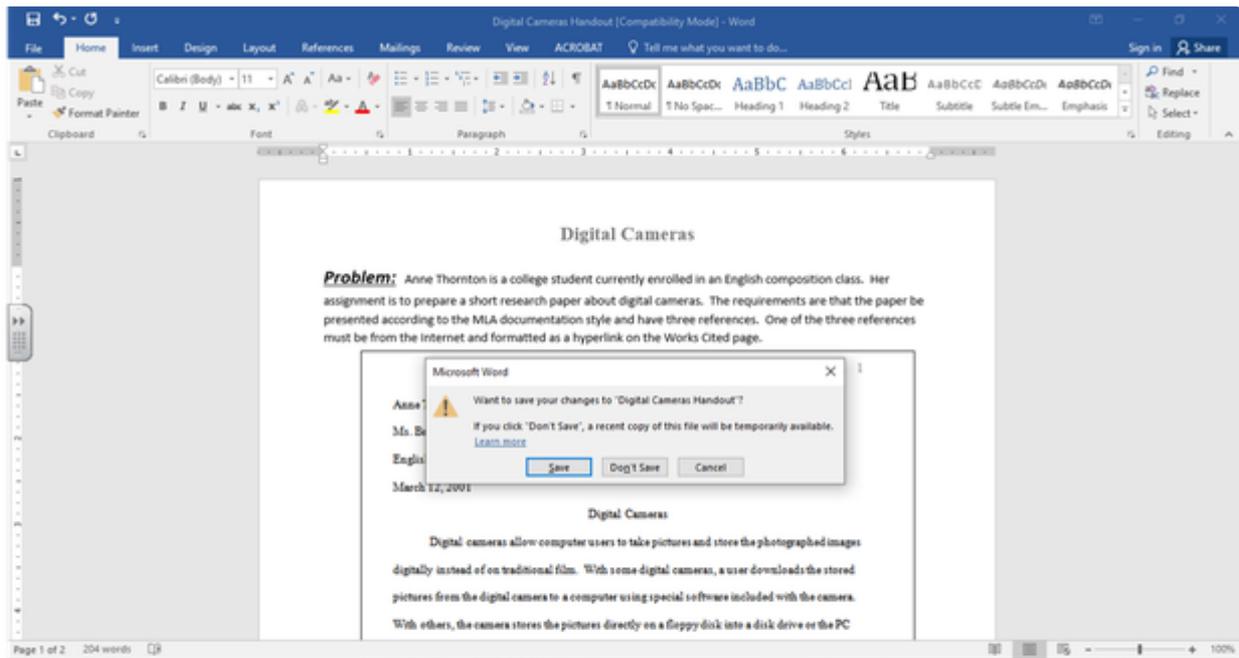


Figure 4

## Featured SDAMLE School!

### Brandon Valley Middle School

Check out their favorite books, apps, websites and strategies!

<http://sdamle.weebly.com/brandon-valley-middle-school.html>





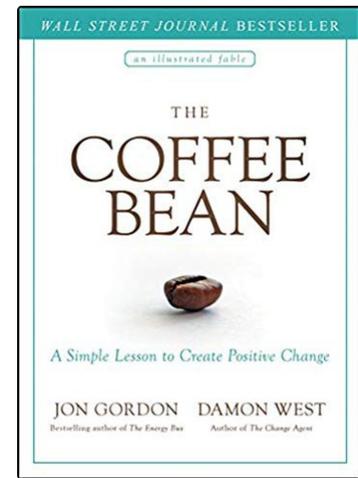
## Read This!

### The Coffee Bean: A Simple Lesson to Create Positive Change

From bestselling author Jon Gordon and rising star Damon West comes *The Coffee Bean*: an illustrated fable that teaches readers how to transform their environment, overcome challenges, and create positive change.

Life is often difficult. It can be harsh, stressful, and feel like a pot of boiling hot water. The environments we find ourselves in can change, weaken, or harden us, and test who we truly are. We can be like the carrot that weakens in the pot or like the egg that hardens. Or, we can be like the coffee bean and discover the power inside us to transform our environment.

*The Coffee Bean* is an inspiring tale that follows Abe, a young man filled with stress and fear as he faces challenges and pressure at school and home. One day after class, his teacher shares with him the life-changing lesson of the coffee bean, and this powerful message changes the way he thinks, acts, and sees the world. Abe discovers that instead of letting his environment change him for the worse, he can transform any environment he is in for the better. Equipped with this transformational truth, Abe embarks on an inspirational journey to live his life like the coffee bean. Wherever his life takes him, from school, to the military, to the business world, Abe demonstrates how this simple lesson can unleash the unstoppable power within you.

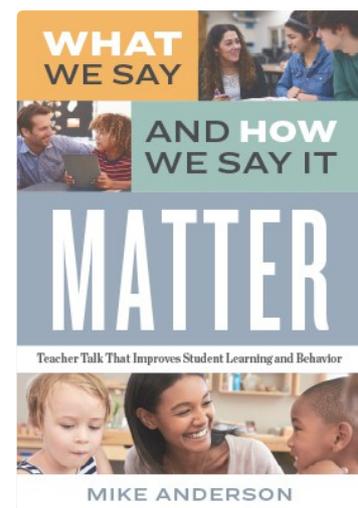


### What We Say and How We Say It Matter: Teacher Talk That Improves Student Learning and Behavior

We all want our students to feel safe, collaborate well with others, feel ownership for their learning, and be joyfully engaged in their work. Nevertheless, many teachers end up using language patterns that undermine these goals. Do any of these scenarios sound familiar?

- We want students to take responsibility for their learning, yet we use language that implies teacher ownership.
- We want to build positive relationships with students, yet we use sarcasm when we get frustrated.
- We want students to think learning is fun, yet we sometimes make comments that suggest the opposite.
- We want students to exhibit good behavior because it's the right thing to do, yet we rely on threats and bribes, which implies students don't naturally want to be good.

What teachers say to students--when they praise or discipline, give directions or ask questions, and introduce concepts or share stories--affects student learning and behavior. A slight change in intonation can also dramatically change how language feels for students. In *What We Say and How We Say It Matter*, **Mike Anderson** digs into the nuances of language in the classroom. This book's many examples will help teachers examine their language habits and intentionally improve their classroom practice so their language matches and supports their goals.



## Middle School Humor!



### Teaming in Middle School

#### Three team approaches that respond to students' unique needs

From the inception of the middle school movement, team approaches to instruction were considered the preferred way to organize a school housing grades 4-8, 5-8, or 6-8. Today, educators see teaching teams as a key to achieving the full potential of a dynamic middle school, one that truly responds to the unique physical, intellectual, social-emotional, and moral developmental needs of young adolescents. Teams may be established on a core interdisciplinary, single subject, or exploratory multi-disciplinary basis. In the most dynamic settings, dialogue and fluidity connect these three systems.

[Click here to read the rest of the story.](#)



### A Best Practice Is Always a Best Practice

How a chat with a former student reinforced and reaffirmed good teaching practices



I walked into a local business yesterday and stood in line waiting my turn. As I stood there, I knew that I recognized the face and the voice of the customer service representative eagerly assisting others. As I progressed through the line, I was taken back 21 years ago to my very first job as a middle school teacher. I was teaching sixth grade English language arts and social studies.

When my turn came and I stepped up to the counter, I simply asked the representative, "Are you Katie and was I your teacher in middle school?" She enthusiastically replied with a "Yes," and then explained what a great year it had been for her. After catching up on what she had been doing with her life—all good things—she made a statement that not only encouraged my heart but begged me to probe further. As I was about to leave, she stated in a positive manner, "I'm so glad that I bumped into you, as you are only one of two teachers that I remember from my entire middle school experience." I hugged her and walked away.

Again, I was immediately encouraged, but I really wanted to know what had made the difference 21 years ago, to the point where she was able to quantify that only two teachers throughout her middle school career really made a positive and significant difference. I asked her if she had just a couple of minutes to talk about what she remembered in terms of those two teachers making a difference. I wanted to take this informal chat and compare it to some things I have studied as a middle school teacher, middle school principal, and current professor.

[Click here to read the rest of the story.](#)

## Watch This!

### **Middle School: A Place to Belong and Become**

**Presenter: Patti Kinney, Laurie Barron**

*Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 4-5pm ET*



If we reduce down what research tells us about quality middle level education, two concepts rise to the top: belonging and becoming. Based on the AMLE book of the same name, the authors, both award-winning former middle level principals, will share practical strategies they used to ensure their schools were a place where students could both belong and become.

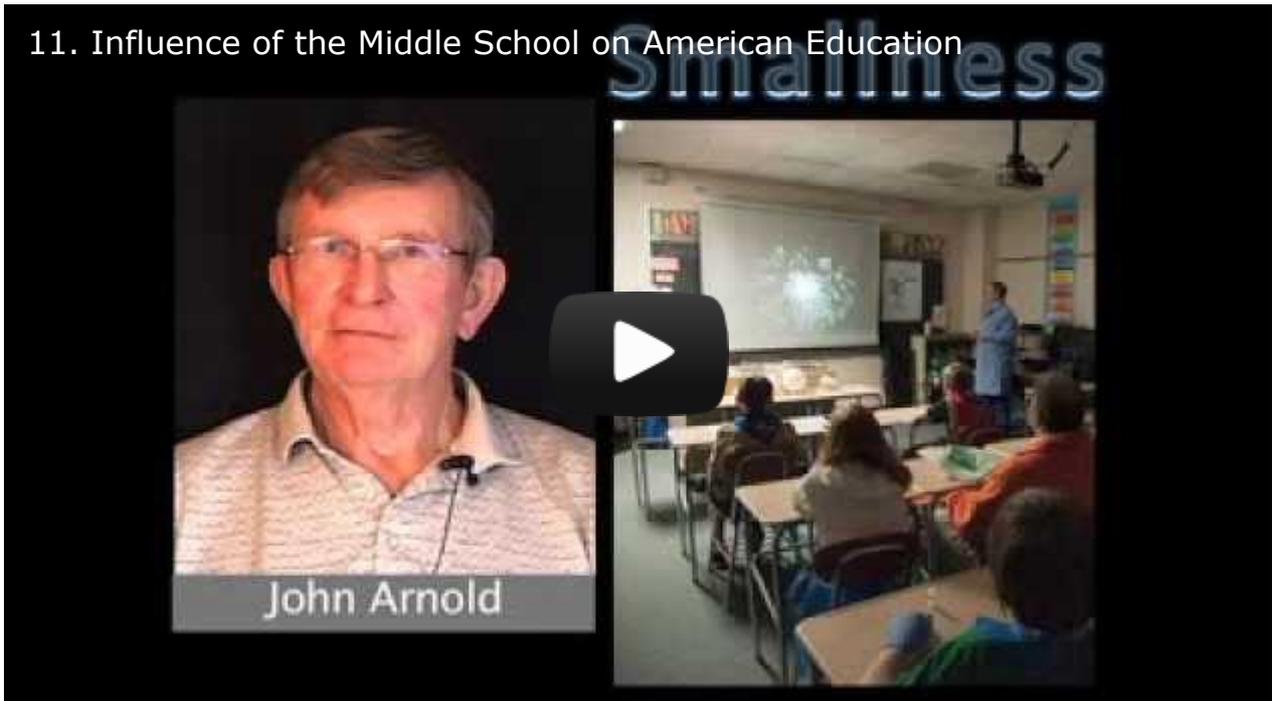
[Click here for more information about AMLE webinars.](#)

### **Influence of the Middle School on American Education**

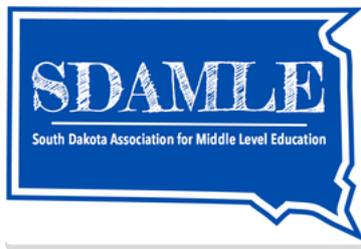
As part of the Middle Level Education Legacy Project, participants were asked, "What effect has the Middle School Movement had on American education?" This video provides a summary of their responses. They cite the significant contribution middle schools made to legitimizing a school in the middle that is deliberately different and focused on the needs of young adolescents. Arnold, Doda, and Johnston discuss how the Middle School Movement has influenced high school reform in American schools because middle schools, from the beginning, were focused on helping young people experience affiliation in small learning teams and communities. Participants also described challenges facing the Middle School Movement, including the lack of recognition in federal law, where middle schools are lumped into the secondary education category, even though the predominant schooling

structure across America is a three-tiered system with elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Sue Swaim challenges middle level leaders to rise to the challenges of retrospection and introspection and to work collaboratively to rededicate themselves to present and future generations of young adolescents.

## 11. Influence of the Middle School on American Education



**South Dakota Association for Middle Level Educators**



# SDAMLE

Facebook @EdSDAMLE

South Dakota Association for Middle Level Education (SDAMLE) 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.

## 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
- Board Member: Sherri Nelson, Brandon Valley School District
- Board Member: Steven Gors, Madison Middle School
- Board Member: Cotton Koch, Madison Middle School
- Board Member: Madeleine Gonsoir, Simmons Middle School
- Board Member: Jason Whiting, Sioux Falls School District
- University Representative: Teri Bauerly, Black Hills State University

✉ sdamlemail@gmail.com      ☎ (605) 773-7330  
🌐 sdamle.weebly.com

## Board Bio of the Month

**Sherri Nelson** is the Director of Instruction for the Brandon Valley School District and consultant for the Power of ICU team. Previously, Sherri spent 24 years in the Huron School District; 2 years as the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Marketing, 5 years as a middle school instructional coach, and 17 years as a middle school family consumer science teacher. Sherri grew up in rural Minnesota, holds a bachelor's degree in Home Economics Education from South Dakota State University and a master's degree in Leadership and Administration from Northern State University. Sherri and her husband Bjorn live in Brandon, South Dakota and have two daughters and one son-in-law; Rachel, a 5th grade teacher at Laura Wilder Elementary in Sioux Falls; Taylor, a Minnehaha County deputy sheriff; and Jennifer an ELA student teacher at Whittier Middle School in Sioux Falls.



[sherri.nelson@k12.sd.us](mailto:sherri.nelson@k12.sd.us)

## 2018-2019 SDAMLE Board Members

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



## Upcoming Events!

### **The Annual Conference for Middle Level Education**

#### When

*Thursday, Nov. 7th, 8am to Saturday,  
Nov. 9th, 12:30pm*

#### Where

*2800 Opryland Drive Nashville, TN*

#### More information

Attend #AMLE19, the 46th Annual Conference for Middle Level Education, November 7-9, 2019 in Nashville, Tennessee, where you will have your choice of more than 300 sessions on 30 topics specifically focused on reaching 10- to 15-year-olds. #AMLE19 will bring you practical, innovative ideas you can use immediately in your school and classroom and connect you with other dedicated and passionate middle level educators to enhance your work with middle school students. Save \$50 with promo code A19SDAMLE More at [www.amle.org/annual](http://www.amle.org/annual)

# MMSA 2019 Annual Conference

## When

Thursday, Dec. 5th, 7:30am to Friday,  
Dec. 6th, 4:30pm

## Where

DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington  
Minneapolis South

## More information

Travel to Minnesota on **December 5th and 6th** for the annual Minnesota Middle School Association Conference. **Rick Wormeli** is this year's keynote speaker.

[Click here for more information on the conference!](#)

## #EdcampSDAMLE

## When

Saturday, March 21st 2020 at 9am

## Where

3100 West 41st Street Sioux Falls, SD

## 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.amle.org/membership.aspx>

