Partnering for the Common Good: Editorial Remarks

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When we announced the call for this theme issue, we invited manuscripts that would span both the genres of our journal and the various organizational types of partnership that exist to support the education of young adolescents. As hoped, "partnership" is defined differently in the four articles that we selected but, in each case, demonstrates how collaboration supports the preparation of pre-service teachers in their work with middle level students at the policy, program, and classroom levels. While extensive research exists on teacher education programs partnering with schools (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; Darling Hammond, 1994; Zeichner & Conklin, 2008), these articles make the case why infusing middle grades philosophy and practice can make a substantial difference for middle grades prospective teachers and students.

The two essays that open this issue argue for model programs that might be replicated at the middle level by other teacher education programs and partnering schools. In "Enacting a Mission for Change: A University Partnership for Young Adolescents," Howell, Deweese, Gnau, Peavley, and Sheffield describe the foundational elements of a professional development school model, with similarities to those advocated by Darling Hammond (1994) back in the 1990s. In this case, however, Howell et al. apply important middle level features that support both pre-service teachers and young adolescents. Among those elements are the roles of individuals involved, including teachers-in-residence, classroom teachers, teacher candidates, university faculty, and middle grades students; the development of relationships with middle grades students through sixth grade orientation and summer flight; and the network of support for pre-service and practicing teachers at the school. These essential elements enabled pre-service teacher to better understand the unique needs and interests of middle grades learners.

The second essay, "Mitigating First Year Burnout: How Reimagined Partnerships Could Support Urban Middle Level Teachers," Behm Cross and Thomas share their preliminary findings of a teacher education/induction program that provides vital support to middle grades teachers as they move from a teacher education program and enter middle schools in urban districts. After making the case for such a partnership by examining teacher attrition in urban settings, discussing the importance of race consciousness, and articulating the value of collaboration among teachers, especially in middle schools, Behm Cross and Thomas propose a university-school teacher residency program that begins in the last year of a teacher education program and supports new teachers through their first two years of teaching in urban middle schools. These supports include a Critical Friends Group, mindfulness training, mentor teachers, and school based liaisons between university and schools.

While the essays discuss partnering at the program level to support new teachers, Hurd and Weilbacher's research looks at partnership at the classroom level and examines a new take on co-teaching. Research on co-teaching is often restricted to different teacher-to-teacher configurations such as a special educator and a content teacher (Friend & Bursuck, 2011) or an English language teacher and a classroom teacher (Davidson, 2006). There is limited research on co-teaching between university faculty and practicing teachers (Nagle & MacDonald, 2013) and even less research on co-teaching among university faculty, student teachers and cooperating teachers (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). In "'You Want Me To Do What?' The Benefits of Co-teaching in the Middle Level," Hurd and Weilbacher examine the co-teaching relationship of a university teacher educator, a student teacher, and a mentor teacher as they work together during the student teacher's field placement. Their study provides considerable insights and challenges in this partnership.

Finally, in "Taking it to the Streets: Teaching Methods and Curriculum Courses On-Site," Wall and Draper discuss the benefits and challenges of situating the first course of a middle grades

teacher education program at a middle school. They detail what teaching onsite looks like for this introductory course, including describing the logistical challenges of serving a rural middle school and also explaining how intentional planning among the university and school faculty affords a strengthening of the alignment between middle grades theory and practice.

The issue as a whole demonstrates the power of partnership in middle grades education from a variety of perspectives. We hope readers will draw as much inspiration and encouragement as we have from these opinions, research, and examples of thoughtful collaboration.

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