

Middle School Leadership Institute
Theme: "Powerful Learning for The Middle Years"
August 19-20, 2013
Benton Middle School

August 19, 2013

8:00-9:30 Cafe Room

Welcome-Bill Bixby, Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools
Introduction to the Team and the Institute- Dr. Nancy Doda
Introduction to Keynote Speaker-Mark Springer
Keynote: "Here they Come Ready or Not" -Dr. Cedrick Gray

9:30-9:45 Cafe Room

Team Building Activity for All-Jill Spencer

9:45- 10:00 *BREAK*

10:00 – 11:15 Breakout Session 1

11:15 – 12:30 Breakout Session 2

12:30 – 1:15 Cafe Room

Lunch

1:15-1:30 *Cafe Room*

Refection Using Today's Meet-Chris Toy

1:30 – 2:45 Breakout Session 3

2:45 – 4:00 Breakout Session 4

August 20, 2013

8:00-9:15 Keynote: "Fulfilling our Promise: Powerful Learning for the Wonder Years"-Nancy Doda, Mark Springer, Jill Spencer, Chris Toy

a) Chris Toy, Jill Spencer and Mark Springer: "*Outlearning the Wolves: The Challenge of Change*"

b) Nancy Doda, "Taking the Leap: Fulfilling our Promise"

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Lunch

1:00 – 2:15 Breakout Session 3
2:15 – 3:30 Breakout Session 4

3:30-4:00 Cafe Room
Closing Conference Round Up

Speakers/Sessions	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Group A – Chris Toy	"Free Web 2.0 Tools for Assessing Student Learning"	"Open Education Resources for Teaching and Learning"
Group B-Nancy Doda	"From Off The Stage To Guide By The Side: Empowering Independent Learners"	"The Reading and Writing Road To Better Understanding"
Group C- Mark Springer	" Designing Thematic Units for Powerful Learning" (I)	" Designing Thematic Units for Powerful Learning" (II)
Group D-Cedrick Gray/Jill Spencer	(Dr. Gray) "Creating and Sustaining A Positive Culture"	Jill Spencer "Assessment for Growth: 3 Strategies"

Session Descriptions:

Nancy Doda, Ph.D.

Monday-"From Off The Stage To By Their Side: Empowering Independent Learners"

Middle school students too often say, "What do you want us to write down? They lean too heavily on our lead. To develop 21st century ready learners, we have to shift the cognitive load to students. Join me to learn several methods that will help you empower students towards greater investment and independence.

Tuesday- "The Reading and Writing Road To Better Understanding"

Accessing and processing new information are two of the most challenging learning tasks for middle school students. In this session, we will examine ways to scaffold all learners through literacy tools useful in every subject.

Cedrick Gray-**Monday Only**

"Creating and Sustaining A Positive Culture"

This session will provide a framework for understanding how school cultures operate and how leaders can work to improve relationships and transform negative cultures into healthy ones. Educators will learn ways to create a school environment that is inviting, safe, inclusive and supportive of all. Moreover, educators will learn ways to create a shared vision that is developed by all stakeholders and that guides every decision.

Jill Spencer- **Tuesday Only**

"Assessment for Growth: 3 Strategies"

Descriptive feedback, summarization, and student self-reflection are practices that lead to increased understanding and learning. In this interactive session we will explore:

- Reasons why it is critical to integrate these practices into our pedagogy;
- Specific strategies participants can share with colleagues back at school.

Mark Springer

Monday- "Designing Thematic Units for Powerful Learning (I)"

Part One: *Understanding Thematic Units*

In this initial session, participants collaborate to develop a working understanding of thematic units, explore the advantages of using thematic units, and analyze examples of thematic units to ascertain the essential elements. Finally, as preparation for the follow up session, we will work on changing into themes topics that the participants currently teach in conventional ways.

Tuesday- "Designing Thematic Units for Powerful Learning (II)"

Part Two: *Unit Planning: From Rhetoric to Reality*

In this follow up session, participants will use the themes identified in session one to begin designing a thematic unit that they can teach in their specific curricular circumstances. Working step-by-step through a process, participants will outline the basic pieces of the unit including essential questions, major products and outcomes, important strategies and activities, resources, and assessments.

Chris Toy

Monday- "Free Web 2.0 Tools for Assessing Student Learning"

Participants will be introduced to free online resources that provide ways for students to show what they know and understand in a variety of ways. Time will be provided for accessing, exploring, sharing, and planning for implementation.

Tuesday- "Open Education Resources for Teaching and Learning"

Participants will be introduced to free high quality OER tools and websites including teacher created curriculum units and textbooks. Time will be provided for accessing, exploring, and planning ways to use OER in the classroom.

Presenter Team BIOS

Nancy M. Doda, Ph.D.

Dr. Nancy Doda began her career in 1974 as a middle school Language Arts teacher in a Florida middle school acknowledged as an exemplary, model middle school. While teaching there, she completed her Masters and Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction /Teacher Education at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and was regularly invited to give addresses and conduct workshops for educators on middle school theory and practice. During those seminal years, she authored a regular column for the *Middle School Journal*, entitled, "Teacher to Teacher", which became an AMLE monograph. Since then, she has worked as a professional development consultant with middle school educators in all 50 states, Canada, Europe, Australia, Japan and regions in the Far East.

In recent years, she served as a charter member of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform (www.mgforum.org). She has received

outstanding educator and service awards from the Virginia Middle School Association, New England League of Middle Level Schools, and Connecticut Association of Secondary Schools. In 2001, she was awarded the National Middle School Association's (now AMLE) most prestigious John Lounsbury award. She has authored numerous articles, tapes, and books.

Today, in addition to continuing steady professional development through her own company *Teacher to Teacher*, Nancy has co-created a new organization called the Alliance for Powerful Learning. This organization centers its energy on transformative change in teaching and learning. From both organizations, Nancy offers professional development experiences on an array of critical middle and secondary school issues but she specializes in practical, inspirational and customized professional development. She frequently serves as a teacher coach to assist with implementing best practices and the common core into units and lessons, and develops new curricula for districts seeking to upgrade middle school and high school curricula.

Cedrick Gray, Ed.D.

Born in Milwaukee, WI, Gray spent his childhood in Memphis, TN. He studied at the University of Memphis, where he received bachelor's and master's degrees, and completed his doctorate at Union University in Jackson, Tenn. He's been a teacher and a principal at two Memphis-area middle schools, first at Craigmont Middle School and at Lester PreK-8 School, where he is credited for successful school turnarounds. Among his professional affiliations, he is a Board Member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Before joining his current school district Jackson Public Schools in Jackson, MS, Gray headed the Fayette County Schools system in southwest TN. In July 2012, the Tennessee Department of Education named Gray's former district exemplary for making significant improvements in student performance. Gray is a proud father and husband as well as an ordained minister.

Mark A. Springer

After graduating from Haverford College, Mark Springer earned his M.A.T. from the University of Chicago and then began a 35-year career teaching at Radnor Middle School in Wayne, Pa. Early in his career, Mark developed and taught courses in interdisciplinary humanities, creative writing, and American Studies. He also co directed the school's gifted program for six years before co-creating the award-winning WATERSHED Program, which he taught for 12 years. In 1998, Mark designed the Soundings Program, an integrative and democratic curriculum for 8th graders. He implemented this curriculum until retiring from the classroom in 2010.

The author of many articles on integrative studies, Mark has written two books

about WATERSHED and another called *Soundings: A Democratic Student-Centered Education*. He regularly presents nationally and internationally on middle-level philosophy, integrated curriculum development, differentiation, authentic assessment, and active learning strategies. He has served on policy committees for AMLE (formerly NMSA); as a Teacher Trustee on the AMLE board; and as a member of the 2010 writing team that revised *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents*, AMLE's signature position paper. In addition to other honors, he was a 2001 top ten finalist for the National Teachers' Hall of Fame and, in 2004, he received AMLE's first ever Distinguished Educator Award.

Mark ,co-founder of the Alliance for Powerful Learning, develops project-based curricula and continues to serve as a consultant for schools across the United States and around the world.

Jill Spencer

High energy and student-tested strategies that can be applied across the curriculum are the hallmarks of Jill's workshops. Jill actively involves her audience in her sessions ensuring they leave with a good sense of how strategies can be applied in different situations. She is passionate about creating learning environments for students that capture their interests, take advantage of their energy, and help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. A former teacher, she now works with educators internationally in the areas of literacy, leadership, and instructional practices including technology integration and differentiation, and curriculum development. Her fourth book for AMLE, *Ten Differentiation Strategies for Building Core Literacy*, was the AMLE May, 2013 book club selection.

Chris Toy

Chris has over 30 years of experience as a high school teacher, middle school principal, university instructor, consultant, presenter, and writer. He has worked with educators in the US, Canada, Europe, Africa, and Asia. His interactive style reflects his belief that teachers and administrators must "Walk the Talk" and model what they want to see from students, faculties, and colleagues.

He has taught courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including middle level leadership and organization, teaching at the middle level, leadership for sustainability, and school law. When he isn't traveling for work he can be found teaching Asian fusion cooking around the State of Maine and on YouTube.