**InTroduCIng ThE MIddLE LEvEL LEadErShIP SErIES**

Learn from respected leaders in the middle level education arena. Make plans now to attend the last one in the series to be held in northern Virginia near Dulles Airport.

April 25, 2008

**Leading for Differentiation**

*Rick Wormeli*

Differentiation of instruction is a proven strategy for enhancing student achievement.

- Develop a professional and responsive mind-set toward differentiation
- Understand what differentiated instruction and assessment is—and what it isn’t
- Identify differentiated instructional and assessment practices in the classroom setting
- Implement cognitive strategies that enhance differentiation practices
- Support teacher efforts to gain and implement differentiation strategies
- Model differentiation practices in the school’s professional development efforts.

This seminar is $75 for NASSP members.* Group discounts available.

* $100 for nonmembers

For more information, visit www.principals.org/mlleadershipseries or e-mail kinneyp@principals.org

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**Middle View: Reflections on Leadership in Middle Level Schools**

**Nineteen Minutes**

A few weeks ago I was introduced to a new resource being developed to help middle level educators deal with bullying issues. Australian filmmaker Christopher Faul has worked with groups of eighth-grade students from Illinois and Nebraska to produce two 23-minute films that highlight the students’ experiences of bullying. The storylines and dialogue are that of the students, and it is so realistic that I felt at times I was reviewing a surveillance tape instead of watching a scripted drama unfold in front of me.

While the project is still in the production stage, shortened previews of the films are available to view and online previews of the films will be available at the site during the week of April 7–13 (www.storiesofus.com/launch).

I share this not only because it’s an exciting new resource for middle level educators but also because this past week I finished reading a novel that again drove home the important role leaders must play in stopping the bullying that occurs in our schools. If you have not read the novel Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Picoult, I urge you to do so. It's now available in paperback and tells the story of a school shooting. Although it is a piece of fiction, it is well-researched and tells a realistic story of the bullying, harassment, and peer pressure that can be occurring in the lives of today’s students. It is sobering, horrifying, and thought-provoking and should be read by school leaders at all levels.

**Are We Doing Enough to Prepare Our Future Middle Schoolers?**

The data are clear. The implications are clear. The consequences are clear. However, I must ask a profound question—are we even listening? Research shows that early childhood education is vital for children. If a young child starts out behind educationally, it will be tough for them to catch up to their peers. I know there are a variety of options for pre-kindergarten education. They range from in-home experiences to more formal preschools.

Which ones are best? We will save that debate for another time or forum, but are we placing true importance on early childhood education?

Consider the following information that displays the disparities our children are up against:

- Number of words heard at home per hour by 1- and 2-year-olds learning to talk:
  - Low-income child—620
  - Middle-income child—1,250
  - High-income child—2,150

- Number of words heard by age 3:
  - Low-income child—10 million
  - Middle-income child—20 million
  - High-income child—30 million.

Visit www.principals.org/middleview to participate in the discussion on leadership in middle level schools.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The National Center for Middle Level Leadership

Visit: www.principals.org/mlleadershipseries