

**Summary of New York State Middle School Association
Middle Level Education Summit
Pat Wheelhouse, NYSCAME Representative
Aug. 20-21, 2008
Albany, New York**

This Summit focused on the Seven Essential Elements for all middle schools, which include:

1. A philosophy and mission that reflect the intellectual and developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents (youth 10-14 years of age)
2. An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based
3. An organization and structure that support both academic excellence and personal development
4. Classroom instruction appropriate to the needs and characteristics of young adolescents provided by skilled and knowledgeable teachers
5. Strong educational leadership and a building administration that encourages, facilitate, and sustain involvement, participation, and partnerships
6. A network of academic and personal support available for all students
7. Professional learning and staff development for all staff that are ongoing, planned, purposeful, and collaboratively developed

Keynote speeches and breakout groups focused on the following guiding questions:

1. What shared understanding do you we need in order to be active participants in the Summit?
2. How do the Essential Elements help us to understand middle-level learners and meet their needs?
3. What needs to be done in order to ensure that all middle-level schools/programs have the Seven Essential Elements in place?
4. How can our individual organizations support and help ensure the full implementation of the Essential Elements in all middle-level schools and programs?
5. What actions will we take to ensure the full implementation of the Essential Elements in all NYS middle-level schools and programs?
6. How can our individual organizations collaborate to ensure the full implementation of the Essential Elements in all NYS middle-level schools and programs?
7. How do the actions of my individual organization support the action steps of other organizations for the full implementation of the Essential Elements in all NYS middle-level schools and programs?

I feel that the most valuable input I could provide was to review the NYSCAME survey on the impact of AIS, particularly at the middle level, with the

various focus groups. I also advocated for the arts with representatives from NSYATA and NYSSMA to continually remind the summit conveners that according to No Child Left Behind, the arts are core academic subjects.