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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MIDDLE START CALLS FOR MORE RESEARCH  
ABOUT MIDDLE-GRADES EDUCATION**

**Middle Start Points Out Critical Need for Middle-Grades Research  
at the National Middle School Association's (NMSA's) 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference**

**New York, NY**— Leaders of Middle Start, a middle-grades improvement program, called for an increase in high-quality research on practices related to middle-grades education at the National Middle School Association's 31<sup>st</sup> annual conference.

“There is a greater emphasis now than ever before on the importance of education research, and yet the middle-grades have been overlooked by much federally sponsored research. The middle-grades are not identified as a distinct phase of learning. If we want to know how to support middle-grades students, who comprise the majority of those annually tested under NCLB, then we have to start identifying them as a distinct group rather than lumping them with elementary or high school students,” said Patrick Montesano, director of the Middle Start National Center at the Academy for Educational Development.

Middle Start representatives are making the call during the NMSA 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference on November 4-6, 2004. Middle Start presentations include:

- High-Performing Teams
- Partnering for Middle-Grades Reform
- Pathways to Student Success: Case Studies of Instructional and Organizational Improvements Undertaken by Middle Start Schools
- Working with Parents and Children of Poverty

NMSA hosts the world's largest middle-grades conference each year with this year's event taking place in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This year's conference theme is “Navigating the Waters of Change.”

**About Middle Start**

The Middle Start initiative combines on-site coaching, professional development, and partner resources to strengthen student achievement in schools with middle grades. Guided by current research and practice emphasizing the developmental needs of young adolescents, Middle Start upholds the three goals that create the foundation for student success— academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, and social equity— through small learning communities, team structure, effective curriculum, student-centered instruction, student assessment; reflective review and self-assessment; and sustainable partnerships. The Middle Start National Center at the Academy for Educational Development provides leadership and support to regional Middle Start partnerships and school networks. For more information visit [www.middlestart.org](http://www.middlestart.org) or contact Lea Williams Rose (lwilliam@aed.org).

**About the Academy for Educational Development (AED)**

Founded in 1961, AED is an independent nonprofit organization committed to solving critical social problems in the United States and throughout the world. AED works with schools, school systems, families, and community-based organizations on comprehensive school and community improvement initiatives, as well as programs addressing specific education issues.

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