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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Middle Start School Featured in *Teaching Today***  
*Wilson Middle School is Off and Running with Middle Start*

**New York, NY, April 18, 2006.** Wilson Middle School, a new Middle Start school, was featured in the March issue of *Teaching Today*, a monthly educational newspaper in Wisconsin with a subscription base of over 52,500 K-12 faculty and staff. Although Middle Start has over 10 years experience in school improvement in Michigan, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, Wilson is the first Middle Start school in Wisconsin, and it is well on its way to whole-school improvement.

Wilson Middle School chose Middle Start because of its track record in helping schools build a “collaborative culture of reflection and improvement rather than adopt a prescriptive model for curriculum and other school structures and processes” (*Teaching Today*, 2006). A number of teachers at Wilson have remarked on noticeable changes in the school in its first year of Middle Start. Noel McMillan, a math teacher commented, “Through Middle Start, changes are taking place in a hands-on, grassroots way, rather than through a ‘canned’ program. . . . Ultimately, teachers are making the changes, considering the strengths and needs of the school, and then acting on them” (*Teaching Today*, 2006).

Wilson Middle School illustrates how Middle Start helps middle-grades schools improve through its research-based principles and practices and customized coaching, building on schools’ strengths. The overall school improvement goals include:

- Students will continuously improve their academic progress in reading, language arts, and mathematics.
- Students will develop skills and behaviors that promote responsible decision-making leading to a safe and respectful learning environment.
- Staff will participate in collaborative teams effectively utilizing assessment, curriculum and instruction, and best practices. Standards-based curriculum will be developmentally appropriate, integrated, and responsive to student needs.
- Communication and support will increase between and among Wilson parent/guardians, the community and Wilson staff.

**About Wilson Middle School.** Wilson Middle School, in Appleton, Wisconsin, has nearly 500 students in grades 7 and 8; the majority (72%) are white, and the remaining students are Asian (19%), Hispanic (5%), and African American (3%); 50% are female and 50% are male. The school has 37 classroom teachers. Principal John Magas is directing the school's involvement with Middle Start.

**About Middle Start.** Middle Start emphasizes three research-based goals that create the foundation for student success in grades 6 through 8: academic excellence; developmental responsiveness; and social equity. These goals can be achieved through small learning communities, student-centered instruction, meaningful assessments, reflective self-study, 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).

To read the Middle Start article in *Teaching Today*, visit:  
<http://www.wischoolnews.com/editions.htm>

***Credits: John Magas (Principal, Wilson Middle School) and M. Bruce King (Middle Start Coach and Education Researcher-Faculty Associate, UW-Madison)***

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