

# ***TAMS Journal***

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## A Message From The President

It has been my pleasure to serve this past year as the President of the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools. This has been a busy, exciting, and eventful year. I believe that a review of the year would be appropriate.

In September, your Board of Trustees developed a set of priorities that the Board would like to accomplish beginning with the 2003 – 2004 fiscal year and for several future years. Jack Berckemeyer, Associate Executive Director of the National Middle School Association (NMSA) helped the Board establish the priorities. In addition, discussions began with Mr. Berckemeyer about TAMS' role as host affiliate for the 2006 NMSA Annual Conference that will be held in Nashville, November 2 - 4, 2006.

TAMS participated in the NMSA sponsored Month of the Young Adolescent by asking Governor Phil Bredesen to proclaim October 2003 as Month of the Young Adolescent. The Governor signed the Proclamation and Paul Williams, TAMS Executive Director, and your President had their pictures taken with him. News releases were sent to Board members and other association members for publication in local newspapers.

The President sent a letter to those Tennessee NMSA members attending the Atlanta Conference inviting them to the TAMS reception. A large number of TAMS members and guests attended the reception and several guests joined TAMS.

With the release of the new ***This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents*** and ***Research and Resources in Support of This We Believe***, NMSA refined its position statement based on the latest research. As an advocate for middle level education in Tennessee, TAMS sent a copy of ***This We Believe*** to every director of schools. The Board felt that this book was so important that each district was sent a copy with the hope that the commitment to quality middle grades education would be strengthened.

TAMS has been an advocate on the state level. Your President, President-Elect, three board members, and a former board member served on the State Middle Grades Licensure Committee that helped revise the university exit standards for licensure in grades 4 – 8. In addition, your President consulted with Ralph Barnett, Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Education, concerning flexibility in middle school vocational classes. At the request the House Education Committee, your President discussed the needs and characteristics of middle level students and the importance of considering them when legislation is considered. They also received a copy of ***This We Believe***.

There have been two excellent drive-in conferences this year at Cedar Bluff Middle School in Knoxville and Central Middle School in Murfreesboro. I appreciate the host schools and all those who attended. I also want to thank the host committee for the 2004 TAMS Summer Conference, headed by President-Elect Jada Meeks, for their excellent planning of this conference. They are to be commended!

I also want to express my appreciation to the Board of Trustees. They have shown excellent insight concerning issues while directing the affairs of your professional association. This has been a great year. Thank you to everyone for your help and support.

Ashley Smith, Jr., President 2003 - 2004