FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome readers! We are excited to share the Spring 2026 edition of the NCMLE Journal with you.

Spring offers a natural moment to pause, reflect, and look ahead. For educators across North Carolina, it is also a reminder that growth, within our students, our schools, and our professional practice, is continuous. In that spirit, this issue of the *NCMLE Journal* aligns with the theme of this year's conference: Moving the Middle Forward.

Middle grades represent a pivotal stage in students' academic and personal development. Young adolescents are discovering who they are as learners while navigating new expectations and opportunities. Supporting them well requires educators who remain reflective, innovative, and responsive to the evolving needs of students and classrooms.

The work featured in this issue reflects the thoughtful practice happening in middle grades classrooms and schools. Contributors highlight approaches that deepen student engagement, encourage reflection, and elevate student voice, while also demonstrating how strong learning communities are built through intentional leadership and collaboration. We're also excited to share our first student-authored column, the Student Showcase. Throughout this edition, our authors remind us that meaningful progress in middle grades education often grows from the daily decisions educators make to support young adolescents.

At the same time, middle grades education continues to evolve. Educators are exploring new technologies, revisiting research on literacy and learning, and considering how best to prepare students for the transitions ahead. The perspectives in this issue reflect that ongoing work—balancing innovation with research-informed practice while remaining grounded in what we know about the needs of young adolescents.

We are grateful to the authors who contributed their work and to the educators across North Carolina who continue to advocate for and support middle grades learners.

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