

FOREWORD

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What constitutes valid measures of accountability of schools and teacher effectiveness? Certainly, in the wake of No Child Left Behind, accountability has been a buzzword that has permeated discussions in both the professional and public arenas surrounding education. As this issue of *Middle Grades Research Journal* goes to press, the United States is in the throes of one of the most controversial and most contested presidential elections of the past century. Regardless of the outcome, the term “accountability” will continue to be paramount in any consideration of school effectiveness.

Ultimately, accountability rests on the shoulders of the teachers in the classroom. With the full implementation of Common Core Standards in all but five states in the nation, new measures of educational effectiveness will be in place by 2014. The use of student data to assess teacher effectiveness has also become an acceptable way of determining the effectiveness of teacher education programs. Louisiana and Tennessee have been employing such measures for several years and report improvement in student scores after teacher education institutions have adjusted their programs in response to value-added data gathered from the students in the classrooms

managed by their graduates. New York has not only adopted a value-added perspective in its newly developed Annual Professional Performance Review of teachers, that state will publish those scores publicly. College or university affiliation of the teacher will also be attached to those records, but at this time, no plans have been announced for publishing report cards for teacher education programs in that state. In all, more than a dozen states plan to use the value-added measures to analyze how graduates of training programs fare in classrooms and help determine which programs produce the most effective teachers.

This special issue of *Middle Grades Research Journal* examines the concept of effective teacher education through rigorous research-based examinations of educational programs for teachers in the middle grades across a spectrum of experiences. Certainly, teacher accountability in the middle grades is one of the most hotly contested areas of exploration. Readers of this journal understand the myriad influences on youngsters in the middle grades and the challenges that face those who embrace that population. We are grateful to Nancy Mizelle and Karynne Kleine for their thorough and detailed work on this issue of *MGRJ*. As legislators and the public rush to

judgment on what constitutes good teacher preparation, we are pleased to present the articles herein, because they address teacher-preparation through empirical research by those who know and care about middle grades education and the educators who serve in those grades.