Professional middle level teacher preparation programs: a needs assessment survey

Dodie Lynn Jarvis Boren

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Dodie Lynn Jarvis Boren entitled "Professional middle level teacher preparation programs : a needs assessment survey." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Education.

Thomas Turner, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Ted Hipple, Everett Myer, John Ray

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)
To the Graduate Council:

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Dr. Ted Hippel

Dr. Everett Myer

Dr. John Ray

Accepted for the Council:

[Signature]

Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of The Graduate School
Professional Middle Level Teacher Preparation Programs: A Needs Assessment Survey

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Dodie Lynn Boren
December, 1997
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to those which have dedicated themselves to the success of this dissertation. I extend a heartfelt appreciation and indebtedness to my Chairman and mentor, Dr. Thomas N. Turner for his guidance, assistance and constant support throughout the progress of this dissertation. His invaluable opinion, reassurance and commitment to the middle level movement helped shape and define this work.

Dr. Ted Hipple, Dr. Everett Myer, and Dr. John Ray, the other members of my doctoral committee, committed themselves to the success of this dissertation, and for this I am extremely grateful.

I wish to extend a special thanks to the middle level educators from the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools who participated in this survey study. Their contribution and cooperation made the success of this project possible. I am extremely grateful to Leanne Trotter, for her assistance in the acquisition of an updated TAMS membership mailing list.

My deepest thanks go to my parents, William O. and Cathie L. Jarvis, who have provided me with unconditional love, support and encouragement throughout my educational career. Their constant support and belief in my personal success gave me the strength to reach my goals. Thanks are given especially to my husband, Craig, whose unwavering faith, moral support and sacrifices throughout this period of graduate study made its completion possible.
ABSTRACT

Since the Tennessee State Board of Education approved a middle level endorsement in July 1997, colleges and universities in Tennessee will be required to create a professional teacher preparation program based on these revised standards. The purpose of this study was to determine the perception of middle level principals' and teachers' concerning which areas of professional teacher training needed to be addressed at the university level.

The population for this study consisted of 1223 members of the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools. A stratified, random sample was drawn of middle level educators who were current, active members of TAMS as of April 2, 1997. A survey was distributed to the sample and 209 were returned.

The majority of the respondents favored the new middle level endorsement but held some reservations concerning job availability. Many indicated that the 5-8 endorsement might be too narrow in comparison to the current K-8 and 1-8 endorsements. However, the majority indicated that broader endorsements (1-8 or 5-12) would spread the teacher too thin and not allow for adequate training at the middle level.

Findings indicated that there was a relationship between the license held by the respondent and the endorsement they preferred. Those respondents holding an elementary license tended to believe that middle level students were more like elementary students than secondary students. Therefore, practicing teachers seeking a middle level position should be trained in an elementary background. Respondents holding secondary licenses tended to believe that middle school students were more like high school students than
elementary students. These respondents commented that preservice training should focus more on the secondary: discipline, motivation, and especially subject matter.

Respondents indicated that methods preparation for more than one subject should be taught in more than one semester, and adequate student teaching experience can be fulfilled in one semester.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. BACKGROUND &amp; INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Background of the Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Problem</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Purpose</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Population and Sample</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Assumptions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Limitations and Delimitations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Definition of Terms</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Organization of the Study</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Characteristics of Middle Level Students</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Middle Level Programs</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Professional Preparation for Teachers in the Middle Level</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Development of the Instrument</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Design of the Study</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Population &amp; Sample Procedures</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Collection of the Data</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Treatment of the Data</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Middle Level Preparation Programs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Current Programs in Tennessee Middle Schools</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Perceptions of the Proposed Middle Level Endorsement</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Background</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER-TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression of Tennessee Teacher Licensing and Career Ladder Certification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-1.</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Number of TAMS Members in the Study Population According to Areas of Residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2.</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Number of Participants Involved in the Study Sample According to Areas of Residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-1.</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Responses to Item 1 Categories Regarding Time Needed in Student Teaching Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-2.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Responses to Item 2 Categories Regarding Methods Preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-3.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Responses to Item Categories Regarding Placement of Course Work in Middle Level Preparation Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-4.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Responses, Reported Cumulatively, to Item Categories Regarding Placement of Course Work in Middle Level Preparation Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics Chosen as Those Not Needed in a Middle Level Preparation Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Five Topics Chosen by Respondents to Include with General Education Course Work in a Middle Level Preparation Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7.</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Five Topics Chosen by Respondents to Include with Middle Level Course Work in a Middle Level Preparation Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8.</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Two Middle Level Programs Implemented in Tennessee Middle Schools as Indicated by Respondents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9.</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of Respondents by Academic Rank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vii
4-10 Years of Middle Level Experience . . . . . . . . . . . . . 60
4-11 Licenses Held by Survey Respondents . . . . . . . . . . . . . 61
CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

As the end of the 20th century rapidly approaches, it is more of a challenge than ever before for middle level educators to teach their diverse students, given problems with gangs, violence, drugs, etc., coupled with the vast needs of adolescents, often foremost on their minds. It can be assumed that in the 21st century these problems will continue to plague students and the educators who try to create an atmosphere in which learning can occur. To meet the growing needs of the diverse adolescent population middle level educators need to be professionally trained. Unfortunately, many of the middle schools in this country aren't staffed with professionally trained middle level teachers and few understand the developmental needs of the adolescent and how the middle school design supports these needs.

According to researchers, Alexander and McEwin (1989), less than 25% of the teachers had any university training specific to teaching adolescents in more than half of the middle schools surveyed in 1988. According to a follow up study by Alexander and McEwin in 1992, the percentage of teachers with university training was still dramatically low. This is due in part to the relatively few middle level teacher preparation programs. McEwin and Dickinson (1995) stress that the lack of professionally trained teachers, "lies not in the unwillingness of prospective and practicing middle level teachers to enroll in these programs, but to the unavailability of undergraduate and graduate middle level teacher preparation programs" (p. 3).
In 1989, The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development addressed eight recommendations for reforming middle level education in their report, *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*. The fifth of these recommendations focused specifically on the training of middle level educators:

Staff middle grade schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents and who have been specially prepared for assignment to the middle grades (p. 58).

In response to the recommendations outlined in *Turning Points*, as well as other middle level research, many states, Tennessee included, have made efforts to review current endorsements and add a middle level endorsement. The Tennessee State Department of Education is in the process of developing a middle level endorsement that will establish standards for colleges and universities to follow when they set up the specific programs designed to license middle level educators. The specific purpose of this study is to determine principals' and teachers' perceptions on which areas of professional teacher training need to be addressed in these middle level teacher education programs.

**Background of the Problem**

In describing the rationale of this dissertation it is necessary to understand the history and background of the middle level movement. The origin of middle level education can be traced back over 100 years. In 1888 President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard University and many of his presidential colleagues led a series of national committees that examined the
secondary education system, looking specifically at college preparation (Irvin, 1992; Lundt, 1996). These committees supported adding grades 7 and 8 to the high school as college prep grades. *Economy of time* (too much time spent in elementary school and not enough time spent on individual subjects) became the byword; the new 6-6 reconfiguration became known as the "junior and senior units" (Irvin, 1992, p. 4). The focus was on college assistance rather than on the adolescent, but Eliot drew attention for the first time to this age group (Lundt, 1996). Just as this change gained acceptance as a "practical and theoretically sound step" public school superintendents and college professors brought a different agenda to the reconfiguration of the "new" secondary school discussions (Irvin, 1992). "The best here-and-now education of young adolescents was their chief concern" (p. 4). As the movement switched focus from *economy of time to meet the needs of adolescents*, the original reason for the reorganization began to diminish. "By the 1920's, the economy of time notion, for all practical purposes, went by the board" and the first junior high schools opened in Columbus, Ohio and Berkeley, California during the 1909 - 1910 school year (p. 4).

The middle school movement, as we recognize it today, is rooted in the junior high movement. Hanson and Hern (1971) wrote, "The history of the first middle school, the junior high school, indicates that it was conceived not as a movement to introduce something new into American education but as an expedient endeavor to ease several supposed deficiencies" (p. 34). These deficiencies, according to Thomas H. Briggs, cited in Clark & Clark (1994), described several critical conditions of the 8-4 system that included an increase in the number of high schools, changes in social and industrial life, an increase in the number of children staying in school past elementary
school, the need for a differentiated curriculum, an increase in budget to support programs, and a need for a clear function and purpose.

Similarly, Leonard Koos, cited in Clark and Clark, 1994, described the forces that were, "responsible for the [junior high / middle level] movement for educational reorganization finding expression in the present widespread establishment of 'junior high schools' or 'intermediate schools.'" Koos labels these forces as economy of time; student learning differences; pupil mortality-retention & dropouts; and the needs of the adolescent (p. 8). These forces were similar to the deficiencies many other researchers were pinpointing as the reason behind the middle level movement. The last three forces Koos describes are still primary reasons supported by current middle level educators.

The second force identified by Koos was the student drop out rate. Studies by Thorndike, Ayers, and Strayer, (cited in Clark & Clark, 1994), showed that an alarming number of students dropped out after fifth grade, only one-third reached ninth grade and one out of ten completed high school. Briggs blamed the lack of compulsory attendance laws and lack of communication between elementary and secondary schools. Blame was also placed on the vast differences in program and teaching (p. 10). "The jump from a 'mother hen' to a flock of single-subject specialists was too great" (Irvin, pg 5).

Lastly, Koos recognized adolescence as a unique time and that adolescents had special needs that needed to be met (1927). This belief was based on the first published work entitled Adolescence, 1905, by G. Stanley Hall who believed that adolescence was a time of great change emotionally, socially, mentally, and physically -- all triggered by puberty. "Because of him
[G. Stanley Hall] and his work, junior high and middle school educators have
developed a tradition and a commitment to assist children and youth to
successfuflly make the difficult transition through the early adolescent years
(Clark and Clark, 1994 p.13). Similar to Eliot, Hall believed in the
reorganization of the education system; however, Hall agreed with the early
supporters of middle level education and focused on the developmental needs
of adolescents. According to Hall's "culture-epoch" theory, the future was
determined by the education received during adolescence. "He called
adolescence a 'psychological second birth' and the adolescent 'a new kind of
being'" (Irvin, 1992, p.5). The junior high seemed a place to nurture the
adolescent's development, yet the developmental needs of the adolescent were
never adequately met. High school programs were scaled down for the
younger students and these programs were often irrelevant to the lives of the
adolescent (Wiles & Bondi, 1993). Briggs discussed that another contribution
to the dropout rate was that schools failed to recognize and account for
learning differences. Koos agreed that students had different learning
preferences and placed these differences in seven categories: Variation in
age of students; difference in physique; difference in sexual maturation;
difference in mental and/or intellectual capacity; difference in academic
work; difference in range of differences; and difference in interest (Koos,
1927, p. 36-50). With the realization that these differences contributed to
student failure and increased the drop out rate, many educators believed the
junior high was the best solution for dealing with the differences. A report in
1918 by the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education (NEA)
called, "Cardinal Principals of Secondary Education" reinforced the need to
support educational differences and endorsed the junior high school (p. 12).
The four forces described by Koos reinforce the changes that took place in the education system in this country with the emergence of the junior high and on through the current middle level transition. "As in the early years of the junior high school, there is a strong desire by many educators to be on the 'cutting edge' of innovations. Although it is generally recognized that the grade levels contained in a school do not necessarily make the school more responsive, some school districts have reorganized the grade level configurations of their junior high and / or intermediate schools and changed the name to 'middle school.' In this process, little has been done to change school environments to ensure that the programs of these schools are developmentally appropriate" (Irvin, p. 23). A study completed by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) pointed out that in order for the middle school to differ from the junior high it must have a curriculum and organization which is specifically geared toward the adolescent (Cawelti, 1988). Simply putting the middle grades together doesn't guarantee that the adolescents' needs will be met. Many things need to change, including the training of teachers to teach at the middle grades. The National Middle School Association (NMSA) is currently one of the leading organizations committed to the success of this movement. This organization is responsible for a wealth of research, reports, and texts surrounding the middle level movement. One of their recent primary focuses has been on the professional preparation of middle level teachers. Despite this organization's commitment, it is becoming increasingly important that states take an active role in developing standards for these new middle schools to follow so that the middle school doesn't end up failing like the junior high before it.
The Problem

Despite the influx of research in the last ten years surrounding the middle level movement and specifically the preparation of middle level teachers, there are still debates over what exactly should be covered in a professional teacher training program. Fortunately, the National Middle School Association / National Certification Accreditation for Teacher Education (NMSA/NCATE) criteria, mandated in 1992, provided a framework for state departments of education to follow as the middle level endorsements and/or criteria for certification are designed. The assumption was, once the standards were designed, they would be passed on to the colleges and universities who in turn would create professional teacher training programs that met, but were not limited to, these standards. This process is not an easy one. The standards must be broken down into specific courses, and the individual courses will make up a program.

The Tennessee State Department of Education formed the statewide AD-HOC Committee to review the existing elementary endorsements and redesign the endorsements to include a middle level endorsement. The State Advisory Council approved the reconfiguration, and the State Board of Education will vote on these changes this summer. If these are approved, the 1-8 endorsement will be broken into a PreK-4 elementary endorsement and a 5-8 middle level endorsement. The addition of the new middle level endorsement will require colleges and universities in Tennessee to each create a professional teacher preparation program based on these standards that would prepare and license students for a career as a middle level

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1 The middle level endorsement was approved by the State Board of Education in July 1997.
educator. Few middle level courses and no middle level licensure programs currently exist in this state's higher education institutions. Colleges and universities will need to ask the question, "What ingredients should make up the teacher training program?" The higher education programs designed to train teachers to teach at the middle level must be approved by the Tennessee State Department of Education before the program can be implemented.

Current middle level educators who are working with adolescents could suggest additional needs not outlined specifically in the endorsement standards. These educators, despite their current professional training, work with adolescents every day and know what their needs are. They have first hand experience with the difficulties and concessions they have had to make to adequately meet the needs of the adolescents they teach. Therefore, this study attempted to determine middle level educators' perceptions about which areas needed to be targeted in a professional middle level teacher education program in Tennessee.

The Purpose

The specific purpose of this study was to determine the perception of middle level principals' and teachers' concerning which areas of professional teacher training needed to be addressed at the university level. In order to attain this purpose this researcher attempted to determine:

1. What specific training of future middle level teachers current Tennessee middle level educators would like to see addressed at the university level?
2. Which programs, characteristic of a true middle school, were in place in Tennessee middle schools?^2

3. Which characteristic middle level program was most often implemented in Tennessee middle schools?

4. Which of the middle level programs currently in place did teachers' and principals' perceive to be effectively implemented?

5. What concerns did these middle level educators hold surrounding the implementation of the middle level endorsement in Tennessee?

6. What specific training and middle level experience did the respondents hold?

Population and Sample

The population of this study was made up of 1223 middle level educators who were members of the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools (TAMS) as of April 2, 1997. This population was chosen because of their assumed interest in and knowledge of the middle level movement due to their membership in the middle level organization. A stratified, random sample was chosen from this population and 300 TAMS members were surveyed.

Assumptions

1. Since the survey dealt with the professional preparation of middle level educators, it may be assumed that the respondents gave true expressions of

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^ Programs which are characteristic of a true middle school include interdisciplinary teaming, teacher guidance, exploratory, intramural, and flexible scheduling (Schurr, 1995).
their views regarding the proposed endorsement and the preparation of practicing teachers.

2. The evaluation of the survey responses accurately reflected the Middle level educators' feelings and perceptions about the middle level endorsement and the professional preparation of middle level educators.

3. Since a stratified, random sampling procedure was used, it may be assumed that the sample was comparable to other middle level educators who were members of the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools (TAMS) population.

4. Since the respondents were experienced teachers in a middle school setting and members of a middle level professional organization, it may be assumed that they were knowledgeable about the middle school philosophy and structure.

5. It may be assumed that the coding of the return envelopes for follow up purposes did not influence the respondents.

Limitations and Delimitations

The population of this survey study was delimited to middle level educators (5th through 8th grade) who were members of TAMS. The population from which the sample was selected came predominantly from urban settings and from East Tennessee.

Definition of Terms

Advisory Program. This is a major component of successful middle level programs because it includes provisions for all students to have at least one
teacher advocate. The teacher becomes part of the school guidance program to focus specifically on instructional and social aspects; these aspects do not require specialized professional training but can be crucial to the success of adolescents. The Advisory Program is supported by the Carnegie Task Force.

**Alternative Assessment.** A way of measuring student learning over a period of time and in varying ways that do not include testing as the primary evaluation tool. Examples of alternative assessment might include writing proposals and conducting group research where students are involved in the evaluation process.

**Core Program.** This program consists of the grouping or teaming of academics. The core courses usually include math, science, history, language arts and sometimes physical education. These courses are taught by a team of teachers who share common students.

**Encore Program.** These non-academic courses usually include the fine arts and the practical arts and include physical education and health when these are not included in the core. The encore program is also referred to as the exploratory program.

**Experienced Teacher.** For the purpose of this study an experienced teacher was one who had been teaching for at least a year.

**Exploratory Program.** The exploratory program is designed as a process by which students can explore their interests, strengths, and talents in a less structured curriculum. This program was intended to occur throughout the middle schools; most commonly it includes the fine arts and the practical arts. Often the exploratory program is called the encore program because the curriculum focus is different from the academic core program.
Flexible Scheduling. When a group of teachers share a common group of students, it gives the team a block of time where they can be creative with the schedule to make maximum use of time on task. Instead of staying in one class for 43 minutes and then shifting to another team class at the cue of a bell, the teams can increase the time limits to two hours with the entire team meeting in a common place, or meet with two teachers teaming half the students and switching after one hour.

Interdisciplinary Team Teaching. Teachers on the team work together to mesh the content of the individual disciplines. This is important for adolescents because they have difficulty seeing the connections of what they are learning with their lives and with the other subjects they are being taught. If teachers can make these connections for them there is a greater chance the adolescent will meet with success.

Junior High. These were the first schools to focus exclusively on middle level aged students. The first junior high schools were opened around 1908. The purpose of the junior high school was to overcome academic differences and help students make the transition from elementary to high school. Organization and teaching approaches used in the junior high were very similar to those found in high schools and became known as a "mini-high school." Teachers felt unconnected with one another, the students were experiencing failure, and middle level educators realized that these problems needed to be addressed. Thus, the junior high was reconfigured to create the middle level school.

Middle Level or Middle School. These terms represent any combination of grades five through eight housed in a school separate from the elementary and high schools. The middle level school is made up of programs that were
designed to meet the changing needs of the adolescent. These programs include, but are not limited to: advisory, teams, exploratory, core, and flexible block scheduling.

**Middle Level Endorsement.** A set of standards passed down by the State Board of Education which future middle level teachers must know to become licensed at this level. Universities must set up programs that meet these standards.

**Middle School License / Professional Preparation of Middle level Educators.** These are specific requirements, separate from and different than elementary and secondary licensing requirements, for middle school personnel.

**NCATE.** This acronym stands for the National Certification and Accreditation for Teacher Education. This organization provides a set of standards higher education institutions must fulfill to earn accreditation in NCATE.

**NEA.** This acronym stands for the National Education Association, a professional organization for teachers.

**TAMS.** This is the acronym for the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools.

**Tennessee Teacher Licenses.** The comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 (CERA) set up a system that included several levels of teacher licenses. After July 1, 1984, Tennessee teachers must serve a four year apprenticeship beginning with one probationary year. After completion of an approved teacher preparation program the teacher receives the Probationary Teacher License. This license is invalid after one year. During this one year, if the teacher receives a positive evaluation, an Apprentice License is
received. An Interim Probationary License is issued to a teacher for a one year school term during which the license holder completes certification requirements. The Apprentice License is valid for five years during which the teacher must teach in a Tennessee public school system for three years. Once the teacher has taught for three years the Apprentice License is invalid, and a Professional License is obtained as long as the teacher received positive evaluations. Teachers can only receive the Professional License after they have a total of four years experience -- a probationary year and three apprentice years. This license is valid for ten years and is renewable by meeting renewal requirements. A Career Ladder Level One Certificate can be issued to a teacher who holds a Professional License (Tennessee Department of Education, 1996). (See Table 1-1)

**Urban Population.** For the purpose of this study urban population is defined as those areas of over 100,000 people. The urban areas in Tennessee are Knoxville, Nashville, Chattanooga and Memphis. The counties in respective order are Knox, Davidson, Hamilton and Shelby.

**Table 1-1: Progression of Tennessee Teacher Licensing and Career Ladder Certification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 -- Probationary License / Interim Probationary License</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 -- Apprentice License</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 -- Apprentice License</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 4 -- Apprentice License</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5 +-- Professional License / Career Ladder Level One Certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organization of the Study

This survey study was organized in five chapters. Chapter one introduced and provided background information. Included in Chapter one was the background of the problem, the problem, the purpose, the population and sample, assumptions, limitations and delimitations and definition of terms.

Chapter two contained a review of related literature. This review of related literature was organized around the characteristics of middle level students, middle level programs, and the professional preparation for teachers in the middle level.

The methods and procedures used in this survey study were described in chapter three. In chapter three the development of the instrument, the design of the study, the population and sample procedures, the collection of the data and the treatment of the data were described.

Chapter four was an analysis of the data. Data was analyzed in four sections defined by the purpose of the study. These four sections included background information, middle level preparation programs, current programs in Tennessee middle schools and perceptions of the proposed middle level endorsement.

Chapter five included the summary, findings, conclusions and recommendations for further study. The findings were reported in the four sections outlined and described in chapter four. The conclusions were based on these same four sections and responded to the problem statements and research questions listed and described in chapter one.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of related literature pertaining to the topic of this study, the professional preparation of middle level educators, is presented in this chapter. An exhaustive review of all facets of middle level teacher preparation was not attempted or feasible.

Before the reform movement can be widely accepted educators must examine and understand the basis for specialized middle level teacher preparation programs. What makes the period of adolescence different from elementary and secondary students? and Why do teachers need professional training that is specific for middle level students and different from elementary and secondary students? To attempt to answer these questions the following areas were examined in this review: (1) the characteristics of middle level students, (2) middle level programs, and (3) the professional preparation for teachers in the middle level.

Characteristics of Middle Level Students

Middle school students are neither elementary or secondary students; their developmental characteristics mark them as unique -- "members of another tier in education" (Schurr, 1995, p. 1). The perception is that adolescence is a difficult transition period in which few want to deal. Anna Freud (1958), cited in Gullotta wrote, "The adolescent manifestations of growth come close to the symptom formation of the neurotic, psychotic, or
dissocial order and merge almost imperceptibly into borderline states, or fully fledged forms of almost all the illnesses." Educators have come to realize that these unique adolescents have their own set of developmental needs that need to be recognized to insure success for both student and teacher. For the last decade, Van Hoose and Strahan have conducted research on early adolescence and reported a summary of their findings in "Young Adolescent Development and School Practices: Promoting Harmony" (1988). In a chapter from The Education of Early Adolescents: Home Economics in the Middle School these researchers discussed the importance of their research to middle level educators. "We need to learn all we can about the patterns of development and ways to understand the unique needs of the students we serve" (Strahan Van Hoose, 1994). Since the emergence of the middle school movement some thirty years ago, the adolescent's social, emotional, cognitive (intellectual) and physical developmental needs have been targeted (Schurr, 1995).

Social Development occurs as young adolescents become aware of themselves not only as individuals but also collectively as members of society. They become aware that, "they need a more comprehensive and global sense of themselves as participants in the family, peer group, community, nation, and world (Schurr, 1995, p. 21). It is important for educators to consider the social characteristics to determine what they can reasonably expect of the young adolescent and how they can provide an environment that guides the adolescent into society successfully (Van Hoose & Strahan, 1988; 1994).

It is during this stage that the adolescents look more often to their peers for decision making instead of to their parents. Adolescents measure their successes and failures by how their peers react to them or how they perceive
their peers will react. During this developmental stage peer pressure is most prevalent. Also related to social development, adolescents need stability from the home front. Kiminski (1995) wrote, "In discussions with ten- to fourteen - year - olds, the need for family security and a personally stable life are often mentioned" (p. 11). With their lives in a state of instability and constant change they have an enhanced need for the stability and dependability home signifies.

Many adolescents are still in the early stages of social development and have not yet learned the art of social compromise. They tend to shut down during a difficult situation and may appear argumentative. Adolescents are learning who they are and where they fit in our changing world -- developing their belief systems. Therefore, they take sides in any debate despite its relevance (Kiminski, 1995; Schurr, 1995).

Adolescents do have what Havighurst (1965) called social self-consciousness. They think everyone is looking at them, talking about them, out to get them. David Elkind (1984) described them as victims of the imaginary. Adolescents see themselves as always in the spotlight. A slight social mistake equals a major disaster. Schurr (1995) wrote, "they can usually be counted on to over - act. They can almost always be counted on to overreact" (p. 22).

It is important for educators to be aware of these social needs. They are in the position to influence adolescent social development, especially to decrease any sense of "... social alienation and anonymity (p. 25). Teachers could use extensive peer teaching, involve community members in the classroom, engage in frequent social and ethical discussion with students, and emphasize critical and creative thinking by dealing with social questions
and situations. George & Lawrence (1982) suggested that educators structure activities and create environments that encourage adolescents to interact and become productive members of society.

Cognitive Development, the second developmental characteristic, is a relatively new term for what was formally known as intellectual development. This happened when the paradigm shifted from Student As Product to Learning As Product and Student As Worker with the focus being on the cognitive characteristics of learning (Schurr, 1995).

Adolescents are extremely curious about things that they find interesting. It is easy for educators to teach them how to research, for example, if they can research topics of interest. What they are curious about today, however, may not be what they find interesting tomorrow. They are fickle. Educators should provide student choice to address these changes in interest. It becomes important for educators to make learning relevant for the adolescent so that they simply don't "... go through the motions of learning while assimilating and understanding very little" (p. 4).

One of the difficulties with teaching adolescents can be the wide range of intellectual abilities. They range from the concrete to the abstract and are often developing on two different cognitive levels simultaneously. Teachers may see this range from subject to subject. "In one subject, students might function at the level of concrete operations while in another they may exercise abstract thinking or even formal operational thinking" (Caissy, p. 30). Abstract reasoning begins to emerge and adolescents consider their own thoughts. Strahan and VanHoose (1994) wrote, "this thinking about thinking may be one of the most critical milestones in young adolescent development (p. 5).
Adolescents also have trouble seeing events and intentions from another point-of-view. They are constantly trying to figure out how others' actions, events, the world in general, affect them. They may not even consider certain events as truly relevant if they are not personally involved. Educators can help these young adults mature in this area by providing authentic lessons and relate the learning to their lives. Providing the connection between new information and the adolescents' life can be the key to success for many adolescents.

The third developmental characteristic educators need to be aware of is their emotional development. The numerous changes going on in the body (physical, social, cognitive) greatly effect the adolescents' emotions. All of these changes also lead to an unrealistic view of themselves—they are self-critical and often dissatisfied. Nancie Atwell, author of In the Middle (1987) wrote, "They measure themselves against the way they think they should be, and they seldom measure up" (p.30). They are measuring themselves against the media and their peers and often come to believe the "big lie" that they are inadequate (VanHoose & Strahan, 1988). How their peer group acts and develops serves as their barometer for normalcy. In fact, that is their primary use for school—as a measuring tool with peers, not for cognitive and intellectual growth.

Therefore, educators must remember that these adolescents may be moody; these mood swings are normal. They may experience anger, doubt, errors in judgment. Educators must reassure these students that they are normal and focus on minimizing the mistakes.

The last developmental characteristic educators need to be aware of is their physical development. Adolescents are rapidly changing physically
and these developmental changes effect the other changes (cognitive, social and emotional). "Early adolescence is characterized by periods of pronounced and accelerated growth. It is perhaps the most dynamic growth period that humans experience with the exception of the fetal and prenatal period" (McEwin & Thomason, 1989, p. 17). For some adolescents their physical changes start as early as 9 and for others there is no evidence of physical maturation until late teens.

Adolescents experience uneven growth spurts, "marked by increases in weight, height, heart size, lung capacity, and muscular strength" (Schurr, 1995, p. 17). Due to these rapid changes in their physical development adolescents often experience poor coordination, awkwardness and low levels of endurance, strength and flexibility. Their bodies may look out of proportion since their extremities grow faster than the rest of their bodies. These growth spurts cause adolescents to have an abundance of energy one minute and decreased energy the next.

The skeletal structure is developing faster than the muscular structure. This is really important for educators to realize due to the health risks involved in some activities. Also, it explains why adolescents need to be in constant motion and often seem fidgety. The ossification process, or hardening of the bones--especially the tail bone, begins to occur during adolescence, and this process causes quite a bit of discomfort. The term "growing pains" stems in part from this change in the tail bone. Melton (1985) addressed the painful ossification process:

Apparently, three bones fuse together and harden in the posterior area and form the 'mature' tail bone. In the process, students, sitting in hard wooden desks, wiggle and squiggle their way
through classes and this painful, physical transition. It should be noted that the sciatic nerve is closely positioned to the skeletal structure to deliberately intensify student discomfort and challenge teachers in their attempts to retain the attention of their students. (p. 65)

One of the most visible signs that adolescents are maturing physically is the sexual changes. Students are developing sexually much sooner than adolescents one century ago. "Biologically, today's young adolescents are approximately two years in advance of the young people for whom the first junior high schools in America were established" (Lipsitz, 1984). Their interest and concern about the multitude of physical changes occurring (or not occurring) dominate their focus and academics fall second. Educators need to be aware of the wide range of physical development. Strahan and VanHoose in their chapter entitled, "Understanding Young Adolescents In A World In Transition," from The Education of Early Adolescents: Home Economics in the Middle School (1994) edited by Smith and Hausafus reported research regarding these vast ranges in physical development.

Some girls begin breast development as early as 8 years, 9 months and as late as 13 years, 3 months. Pubic hair appears anywhere from 9 years to 13.5 years. Girls may begin to menstruate as early as 10 years, 9 months. Boys experience a growth in their testes as early as 9.5 years and as late as 13.5 years; growth of the penis may begin as early as 10.5 years (p. 4). Adolescents do not allow for these variations and often feel inferior. "They do not meet the mythical standards they create, and they feel uncomfortable and inadequate" (p. 4). It is important for educators to educate the
adolescent on these variations to alleviate some of the concern over their own development.

**Middle Level Programs**

The Middle School ideal recognizes these developmental needs of adolescents and provides exploratory programs, intramurals, advisory programs and teaming situations in response to their needs. Exploratory programs provide experiences that allow students to explore their constantly changing interests, identity, and aptitudes, and to broaden their horizons. These classes provide opportunities for adolescents to achieve in areas other than the traditional "core" or academic subjects: math, science, etc.

Intramural programs also provide a safe environment in which all students can experience success. They are no-cut, all participate programs. It gives everyone a chance to play in a non-competitive environment. Advisory is unique to middle schools. It is a small group of around 10-15 students with one adult in each group—not necessarily a teacher. It is a contact time for adolescents to bond with an adult; to have this adult as a liaison to other things going on in the school—academic and other.

Teaching teams can provide a "family" of learning dedicated to the growth and development of the adolescent. The team provides varied grouping and scheduling techniques and is able to plan this changing curriculum because they share a common planning time and are in control of their own schedule.

The middle school philosophy calls for active participation by all students and for a great deal of experiential learning and strives to be
developmentally responsive to the learner, both in philosophy and organization. It is one of the best ways to educate these adolescents while catering to their developmental needs. "Unfortunately, some teachers make the assumption and continue to plan and use instructional methods that worked well with young people 10 to 20 years ago but do not work well with students today" (Strahan & VanHoose, 1994, p. 9). Teachers at the middle level must be prepared to face the challenge of teaching this dynamic group. Training at the elementary and secondary levels is not sufficient for the middle grades.

**Professional Preparation for Teachers in the Middle Level**

Although middle level researchers have been aware of the adolescents' developmental characteristics for decades, educators have little understanding of these developmental needs (Eichhorn, 1996; Alexander, 1968; Strahan, 1982; VanHoose & Strahan, 1988; 1994). In fact, many middle schools are currently staffed with "...teachers who have neither knowledge of young adolescents nor understanding of curriculum organization and instruction strategies that are appropriate for this age group (Swaim, 1996). Each level of education deserves a staff trained for that particular level. This is especially important for teachers in the middle level who work with students who are dealing with an abundance of developmental changes and require special understanding.

In 1989, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development recommended in their report *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, that middle schools be staffed with teachers professionally
trained to meet the needs of adolescents. The fifth recommendation in this report focused specifically on the training of middle level educators:

Staff middle grade schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents and who have been specially prepared for assignment to the middle grades (p. 58). This document opened the flood gates on many issues, but recent research has centered on the need for professionally prepared middle level educators and therefore professional programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels which would prepare these teachers.

Dr. C. Kenneth McEwin has been an avid researcher and supporter of the need for professionally trained middle level educators. Dr. McEwin is a Professor of Education at Appalachian State University and he is the chair of the NMSA's committee on Professional Preparation and Certification. In the latter position, he provides leadership in the preparation of the first Middle Level Guidelines for the National Certification and Accreditation for Teacher Education / Teacher Preparation Curriculum Guidelines. He has completed two major studies that support the need for colleges and universities to create undergraduate and graduate programs that would prepare and certify teachers to teach at the middle level. Dr. Thomas McEwin has been instrumental in identifying existing professional middle level teacher education programs.

Middle Level researchers are concerned that the middle school will suffer the same fate as the junior high that started out with at least one of the same ideas: adolescents' needs are different from students in high school and elementary school. McEwin co-authored a book entitled, *The professional Preparation of Middle Level Teachers: Profiles of Successful*
Programs, (1995) in which he discussed this growing concern. McEwin profiled fourteen middle level teacher education programs that he observed as evidence of a renewed commitment to develop programs which specifically train middle level teachers. Many of these programs did not exist in 1989 when Turning Points was published. McEwin wrote that programs such as these help assure that there will be teachers adequately prepared to carry out middle level educational ideals into the 21st century (1995). However, more higher education facilities and state boards of education need to move in the direction of special requirements and training for the middle level.

Reports show that nearly one-quarter of new teachers lack the qualifications for their jobs. More than 40 states allow districts to hire teachers who have not met even basic requirements. Rarely do state and local districts require formal apprenticeships or provide regular mentoring to beginning teachers. "The failure of many states to require special certification/licensure requirements is one major reason why there are so few specialized middle grades teacher preparation programs (McEwin & Dickinson, et. al..., 1995, p. 4).

The topic of specialized teacher preparation is universally recognized as a key to the continued success of the middle school movement, yet many universities or state boards of education have done little to ensure middle level educators are prepared to teach this unique group of students and also that middle level schools are staffed with these specially trained middle level educators (Swaim, 1996). A certification survey of state education agencies, conducted by McEwin in 1987, yielded information regarding the existence of special middle level certification requirements (full certification and/or endorsement) in twenty-eight states (NMSA, 1981). This is an improvement
from 1968 when only two states had such requirements and even from 1978 when fifteen states had such requirements (Alexander and McEwin, 1988). In addition to the twenty-eight states, reported at the time of this study, requiring middle level certification, nine other states reported that certification was under study. Of these, six states were considering or were in the process of establishing special middle level certification standards: Idaho, Maryland, New Hampshire, Ohio, Tennessee, and Vermont. Only five states reported special certification requirements for middle level principals: Colorado, Kentucky, North Dakota, Rhode Island, and Virginia. Surprisingly, only three states require special middle level certification standards for counselors: Kentucky, Minnesota and Virginia (Alexander and McEwin, 1988). According to Valentine and Mogar, 1992, only 33 states had specialized middle grades teacher certification/licensure or endorsements. "Only 11 of the 33 states that now have special middle grades licenses or endorsements actually require middle level teachers to hold them in order to teach young adolescents" (McEwin & Dickinson, et. al. .p. 4). Few prospective teachers preparing for a career in education will take specialized courses not required by their program. Alexander and McEwin, cited in McEwin and Dickinson, et. al., discuss that, "altruism alone is seldom sufficient motivation for middle grades teachers to seek out this preparation when there is no recognition of their efforts to gain new knowledge and skills" (p. 4). Higher education institutions probably would not create a specialized middle level teacher education program if there was no special license / certification or endorsement required by the state. Therefore, to maintain the middle level movement by preparing teachers to teach at the
middle level, the state department of education and the higher education institutions must work in conjunction with one another.

National, as well as state concern, about middle grades reform has contributed to increased research interest during the past twelve years surrounding special certification. Alexander and McEwin (1984, 1988, & 1989) point out that poorly prepared and uncommitted personnel cannot do the job required at the middle level, and the lack of teachers trained for the middle grades has long been viewed as an obstacle to the growth of developmentally responsive schools. The national adolescent development task force report, Turning Points (1989) recommends state certification requirements along with college and university programs of study for teachers in that area of specialization. Researchers have investigated what components should be included in a middle level teacher training program.

George and McEwin (1978) reported that a consensus had developed concerning the characteristics of effective middle school teacher education programs. The National Middle School Association (NMSA) in 1986 proposed general standards for middle level preparation programs called "essential elements." NMSA is one of the constituent members of NCATE and by joining NCATE, ". . . NMSA was recognized as the only national professional organization that could establish middle level teacher preparation guidelines and assess NCATE accredited institutions that have middle level teacher education programs" (Swaim, 1996, p. 30). These "essential elements" have, in turn, become the foundation for criteria developed by NMSA for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NMSA, 1991). Beginning in 1990, all middle level teacher education programs must meet NMSA/NCATE criteria. NMSA's Professional Preparation and Certification
committee provided the leadership in the development of these new guidelines.

The NASDTEC Outcome-Based Standards and Portfolio Assessment: Outcome Based Teacher Education Standards for Elementary, Middle, and High School Levels have also provided guidance to those establishing middle level teacher education programs and were designed to satisfy state certification/licensure requirements across the nation (McEwin & Dickinson, 1995). A third set of standards, The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, defines what professionally prepared middle level teachers should know and be able to do. "The contents of these standards are valuable in continuing the growth and development of practicing middle grades teachers" (p. 2).

In 1995, McEwin and Dickinson, et al., recognized that despite an influx of documents geared to help those designing middle level teacher preparation programs, none of these presented a specific list of principals to guide the design. McEwin and Dickinson's, et al., book, A Vision of Excellence, grew out of that specific need. The text attempted to, "reflect and expand the knowledge base on beginning middle grades teacher preparation [to] present the total program in a manner that allows those utilizing it the flexibility to create their own visions of how the curriculum can be implemented" (p. 2). When used as a companion with other resources, this provides a valuable framework to create a middle level education program. Middle level researchers have investigated what components should be included in a middle level teacher training program.

DeMedio and Mazur-Stewart (NASSP Bulletin, 1990), for example, found that both teachers and principals support obtaining special
certification/licensure for counselors and teachers through additional course work more than through a degree. They also believed that a special certification/licensure for counselors and teachers would result in a more positive learning experience for adolescents. Moreover, these researchers arrived at the conclusion that both groups strongly favored the study of discipline and middle school child development, along with middle grade field experiences for an appropriate preparation program.

Additionally, research conducted by DeMedio and Kish (1980) in the area of middle school certification/preparation indicated that middle school teachers and principals favored certification, but those working in elementary and secondary schools did not.

The purpose of this survey study will attempt to determine middle level educators' perceptions to which areas need to be targeted in a professional middle level teacher education program in Tennessee.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of middle level educators in Tennessee about which areas of professional teacher training need to be addressed at the university level. Further, the study was concerned with the following: (1) collecting general demographic information about the respondents and their professional training; (2) determining which programs, characteristic of a true middle school, were in place in Tennessee middle schools; (3) determining which characteristic middle level program was most often implemented in Tennessee middle schools; (4) assessing whether or not the respondents perceived the middle level programs currently in place to be effectively implemented; (5) identifying the respondents' perceptions toward the implementation of the middle level endorsement in Tennessee; and, (6) identifying the perceptions of the respondents' toward larger endorsements.

The methods and procedures used to achieve these purposes involved the following steps discussed in Chapter III: (1) development the instrument; (2) design of the study; (3) population and sample procedures; (4) collection of the data and follow up with nonrespondents; and (5) treatment of the data.

Development of the Instrument

The researcher reviewed the literature in an attempt to locate a valid instrument which would meet the purpose of this survey study. In reviewing
the literature and related research it was found that most survey studies measured the attitudes of those currently employed in middle level education toward middle level certification issues (DeMedio & Kish, 1980; DeMedio & Mazur-Stewart, 1990; Harnett, 1992). Although several studies (George & McEwin, 1978; Gillan, 1978; DeMedio & Kish, 1980) concentrated on what components should be included in a professional middle level teacher education program, the researcher determined that none would adequately meet the study purpose. Therefore, a survey instrument was designed to solicit information from the respondents based on the study purpose. The two main parts of the survey were: (1) demographic background information; and (2) middle level preparation programs. The survey instrument, designed by the researcher, contained thirty items and was divided into two parts. Part one of the survey contained seven items designed to obtain background information on the respondents: years of middle level experience, certification and licenses held, and middle level programs currently implemented in their school. Part two contained twenty-three items. The researcher designed the first two questions to assess opinions regarding the length of student teaching experience and the number of method preparations each practicing teacher should have. The next eighteen items in part two (questions # 3-20) were designed to determine opinions which areas respondents felt should be covered in a professional middle level teacher education program. The respondents chose from three possible responses: None, General Education, Middle Level. Respondents were asked to decide whether teachers enrolled in a Middle Level Preparation Program should have training related to the topics listed in a general education course, a middle level course or no training at all.
The final qualitative questions were designed to determine attitudes toward the proposed middle level endorsement and provided a place for additional comments related to this survey study.

The researcher conducted a pilot study at an east Tennessee middle school. The voluntary respondents completed the anonymous survey and the principal returned the completed surveys in a sealed envelope. The responses to each item category were reviewed. The researcher determined from the responses that a few minor changes were necessary. Additional open-ended questions were included and a demographic question was deleted.

**Design of the Study**

For this survey study a stratified, random sample was drawn of middle level educators who were current, active members of TAMS as of April 2, 1997. The investigator first conducted a pilot study with two principals and ten teachers from an east Tennessee middle school to test the survey questions before submission to the sample. The researcher reviewed the responses to the pilot survey to determine if the questions were soliciting responses as originally intended. The researcher asked the following questions:

1. Is the survey measuring what it intended to measure?
2. Are there questions that are not needed because the same information is gleaned from another question on the survey?
3. Are any additional questions needed to adequately fulfill the purpose of this study?
Based on the pilot study the survey was revised. Additional open-ended questions were included and a demographic question was deleted. Once these revisions were complete the survey was distributed to the sample. The cover letter explained the study purpose, gave directions, and encouraged the expedient return of the questionnaire (See Appendix A for a copy of the cover letter and the survey).

Population and Sample Procedures

The population for this study consisted of 1223 middle level educators who were current, active members of the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools as of April 2, 1997. The TAMS Board of Directors granted permission to use the association's membership list as the population for this survey. A stratified, random selection of three hundred members from the TAMS population made up the survey sample. The sample was stratified in two ways: 1) by division (East, Middle or West Tennessee) and 2) by rural or urban. To accomplish this the researcher identified the member's area of residence utilizing the address list provided by TAMS and placed each member of the population into one of the three standard divisions--East, Middle, and West Tennessee--as established by the state Department of Transportation (Appendix B). The members of the population from each division were then divided into a rural or urban category.

The total population of the East Tennessee division was 682 members. This made up 56% of the entire TAMS population in Tennessee. Two hundred and forty-two members lived in rural areas and 440 members resided in urban areas. The counties that were most heavily represented in
East Tennessee due to the urban population of these counties were Knox and Hamilton. The total population in the Middle Tennessee division consisted of 278 members, approximately 23% of the population. One hundred and seventy-nine members resided in rural areas and 99 members resided in urban areas. The county that was most heavily represented in Middle Tennessee due to the urban population of this county was Davidson. The total population in the West Tennessee division consisted of 263 members, approximately 22% of the TAMS population. Eighty-nine of the members were from rural areas and 174 members were from urban areas. The county that was most heavily represented in West Tennessee due to the urban population of this county was Shelby. (See Table 3-1)

The study sample was determined by considering the percentage of members in each division -- East, Middle and West, and the percentage of members in rural and urban populations within each division. (See Table 3-2) A formula determined by Dr. John Ray and the researcher was used to determine the sample population for each of the three standard divisions. The sample included 167 participants from East Tennessee, 65 participants from Middle Tennessee and 68 participants from West Tennessee. Forty-one percent of the sample participants came from rural areas in Tennessee and the remaining 59% came from urban areas in Tennessee. Identical surveys were sent to the study sample to investigate what they perceived as specific qualifications, knowledge and/or skills middle level educators should possess, and, therefore, needed to be addressed in professional preparation programs in Tennessee higher education institutions.
Table 3-1: The Number of TAMS Members Involved in the Study Population According to Areas of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIVISION</th>
<th># OF TAMS MEMBERS</th>
<th>MEMBERS FROM RURAL AREAS</th>
<th>MEMBERS FROM URBAN AREAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAST</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL TAMS POPULATION = 1223

Table 3-2: The Number of Participants Involved in the Study Sample According to Areas of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIVISION</th>
<th># OF SAMPLE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS FROM RURAL AREAS</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS FROM URBAN AREAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAST</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SAMPLE POPULATION = 300
Collection of the Data

A packet containing a cover letter, survey and self-addressed, stamped return envelope was sent out on April 21, 1997, and 127 members in the sample returned their survey. A second mailing went out two weeks later, May 5, 1997, to nonrespondents yielding 58 completed surveys, and an additional 2 surveys returned unopened due to a wrong address. A third mailing went out on June 7, 1997, to the remaining 116 nonrespondents that yielded an additional 27 completed surveys. From all three mailings 27 surveys were returned from the principals, 175 from teachers, and 7 fell into the other category. Six of those respondents from the other category identified themselves as either counselors or higher education personnel, and one respondent was a psychologist. It was important to the researcher that the sample represent a cross-section of people interested in middle level education, but it was also important that the largest number were teachers. A total of 209 completed surveys were returned out of the 300 distributed making the return rate 69.6%.

Treatment of the Data

After the return of each survey the researcher recorded the return on a printed researcher-prepared spreadsheet document that was created to keep track of nonrespondents for follow up purposes. No names were included on this document.

Data was transferred from the survey questionnaire forms to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet calculated the number and percentage of responses to questions 1 through 7 in Part I--Background Information, and
in Part II, items 1-20. In order to determine the overall attitudes of the respondents, the researcher reviewed the remaining three qualitative questions (Part II, #'s 21-23) looking specifically at the following: (1) patterns in the responses, (2) favorable and non favorable comments directed at the middle level movement and the new middle level endorsement, (3) specific concerns of the respondents toward the existing elementary endorsements and the proposed middle level endorsement; and, (4) correlation between years of experience or licenses held and perception of the new middle level endorsement.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of middle level educators in Tennessee concerning which areas of professional teacher training need to be addressed at the university level. Further, the study was concerned with answering the researcher's initial research questions:

1. What specific training of future middle level teachers current Tennessee middle level educators would like to see addressed at the university level?
2. Which programs, characteristic of a true middle school, were in place in Tennessee middle schools?
3. Which characteristic middle level program was most often implemented in Tennessee middle schools?
4. Which of the middle level programs currently in place did teachers' and principals' perceive to be effectively implemented?
5. What concerns did these middle level educators hold surrounding the implementation of the middle level endorsement in Tennessee?
6. What specific training and middle level experience did the respondents hold?

Seventy percent from a population of middle level principals, teachers, and other educators, identified as higher educators, counselors and a psychologist, returned the survey questionnaire. In Chapter IV, the researcher described data derived from the survey in the following four areas defined by the purpose of the study: (1) middle level preparation
programs; (2) current programs in Tennessee middle schools; (3) perceptions of the proposed middle level endorsement; and (4) background of the respondents.

**Middle Level Preparation Programs**

Part two of the questionnaire focused on the design of middle level preparation programs and attempted to answer the following research question:

1. What specific training of future middle level teachers current Tennessee middle level educators would like to see addressed at the university level?

This section asked the respondents to determine which items should be present in a middle level preparation program at higher education institutions in the state of Tennessee. Table 4-1 reports the percentage of responses to item 1 categories regarding the length of student teaching experience each practicing teacher should have. The majority of the respondents agreed that at least a semester of student experience was needed by practicing teachers. Forty-four percent of the principal respondents indicated that practicing teachers should be enrolled in at least a semester of student teaching experience, and 40.7 percent responded that a full year internship would be their choice. Only 14.8 percent of the principals indicated that 6-12 weeks was sufficient time spent in student teaching. The majority of teacher respondents, 89.9 percent, indicated that at least a semester of student teaching experience was needed, and 29.7 percent chose a full year internship.
Table 4-1: Percentage of Responses to Item 1 Categories Regarding Time Needed in Student Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>6 to 12 Weeks %</th>
<th>At least a Semester %</th>
<th>Full Year Internship %</th>
<th>Other %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There seemed to be a relationship between years of experience and the length of student teaching experience chosen on this item. The majority of the respondents have been teaching more than 13 years and therefore would not have completed a one year internship. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents in the other group indicted that a full year internship was the top choice, and 28.6 percent chose at least a semester as the appropriate length of time. The three groups agreed that 6-12 weeks of student teaching experience was not a sufficient length of time. Under 15% of each of the three groups chose the 6-12 week category as the choice for length of time spent student teaching.

Table 4-2 shows the percentage of responses to item 2 categories regarding what methods preparation middle level educators should have. All of the three groups agreed that some methods courses were needed. None of the groups, 0.0%, chose the category, No Methods course(s). The majority of all three groups, principals 55.5 percent, teachers 44 percent, and other 57.1 percent, indicated that more than one semester and more than one content area was their preference for time spent in middle level methods courses. Forty-one percent of the principals, 38.3 percent of the teachers, and 28.6 percent of the others indicated that they would prefer to see practicing teachers enroll in one semester of student teaching and more than one content area should be studied during this one semester. Only 3.7 percent of the principals, 17.7 percent of the teachers, and 14.3 percent of the others indicated a single methods course (3-6 hours) as sufficient time spent in student teaching.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No Methods Course(s)</th>
<th>1 semester/ More than 1 Content Area</th>
<th>Single Methods (3-6 Hrs)</th>
<th>More than 1 Semester / More than 1 Content Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of part II, items 3-21 was to determine which item categories the respondents would include in a professional middle level preparation program. The respondents were asked to decide if the item was necessary at all, if it should be included with general education course work or should be included with middle level course work. Tables 4-3 and 4-4 reported findings for Part II, items 3 through 21. Table 4-3 reported separately each group's perceptions of which items needed to be incorporated into a middle level preparation program and how they should be placed within this middle level program. Item 6 - Varied grouping and scheduling techniques, was chosen by 14.3 percent of the respondents in the other group as a category which was not needed at all in a professional middle level teacher education program. Only 3.7 percent of the principals and 2.3 percent of the teachers agreed. The majority of the principals, 63 percent, and teachers, 54.9 percent indicated that item 6 should be placed within the middle level course work instead of the general education course work. The majority of the respondents in the other group, 57.1 percent disagreed and indicated that item 6 should be placed within the general education course work.

Similar to findings for item 6, item 7 - team building, collaborative teaching, was chosen by 14.3 percent of the respondents in the other group as an item which was not needed in a professional middle level teacher preparation program. Only 3.7 percent of the principals and 1.1 percent of the teachers agreed. The principal and teacher respondents disagreed about the placement of item 7. Fifty nine percent of the principals placed item 7 under middle level course work, but 54.3 percent of the teachers placed item 7 under general education course work. The remaining 86 percent of the respondents
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Topic / Group</th>
<th>None %</th>
<th>General Ed. Coursework %</th>
<th>Middle Level Coursework %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>The developmental needs of adolescents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>The philosophy, programs &amp; development of the middle level school</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>The programs &amp; components characteristic of a middle school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>77.1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>Varied grouping &amp; scheduling techniques</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>57.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
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Table 4-3: Continued

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Topic / Group</th>
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<th>General Ed. Course work %</th>
<th>Middle Level Course work %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>Team building, collaborative teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>Classroom management skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>42.9</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Concentration in a specialized content area</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Specialized content methods</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>25.9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>46.9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>71.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
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<td>Philosophy of education</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>80.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>14.3</td>
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Table 4-3: Continued

<table>
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<th>Topic / Group</th>
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<th>General Ed. Coursework</th>
<th>Middle Level Coursework</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12</td>
<td>Inclusion &amp; mainstreaming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>80.6</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#14</td>
<td>Unit &amp; lesson planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>67.4</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15</td>
<td>Field experience in a middle school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#16</td>
<td>Reading in the content area</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
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</table>
Table 4-3: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Topic / Group</th>
<th>None %</th>
<th>General Ed. Coursework %</th>
<th>Middle Level Coursework %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#17 Instructional technology</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>33.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>73.1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.7</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>40.7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#19 Remedial reading</td>
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<td>3.7</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#20 Other…</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-4: Percentage of Responses, Reported Cumulatively, to Item Categories Regarding Placement of Course Work in Middle Level Preparation Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item # / Topics</th>
<th>None %</th>
<th>General Ed. Coursework %</th>
<th>Middle Level Coursework %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20.1</td>
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</table>
Table 4-4: Continued

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Percentage 1</th>
<th>Value 2</th>
<th>Percentage 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#13</td>
<td>Ways to motivate the adolescent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#14</td>
<td>Unit &amp; Lesson Planning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15</td>
<td>Field experience in a middle school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#16</td>
<td>Reading in the content area</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#17</td>
<td>Instructional technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#18</td>
<td>Methods of individualized instruction</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#19</td>
<td>Remedial reading</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#20</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in the other group were evenly split between the general education and middle level course work.

To glean an overall picture of the respondents' views regarding placement of items in a professional preparation program, table 4-4 cumulatively reported the respondents' responses to item categories in Part II, items 3 through 21. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents identified item 11 - philosophy of education, as the top choice in general education course work. The second most popular choice for items to include in general education course work was item 17 - instructional technology, as indicated by 72.7 percent of the respondents. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents indicated item 19 - remedial reading as the third choice. The three items which were chosen most often by respondents to include with middle level course work in a middle level teacher preparation program were item 15, item 4 and item 8. Item 15 - field experience in a middle school was indicated by 69.9 percent of the respondents. Item 4 - the philosophy, programs and development of adolescents was the second most popular choice as indicated by 59.8 percent of the respondents. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that item 8 - classroom management skills, should be included with middle level course work.

Tables 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7 reported respondents perceptions on the way in which items listed in Part II, #'s 3 to 20, should be incorporated in a middle level teacher preparation program. Table 4-5 reported the items which respondents chose most often as those topics which are not needed in a middle level teacher education program. Under 2 percent of the respondents, for each of the following items, indicated that these were not needed at all in a professional middle level preparation program.
### Table 4-5: Topics Chosen as Those Not Needed in a Middle Level Preparation Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics Not Needed</th>
<th>Number of Subjects</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The philosophy, programs &amp; development of the middle level school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The programs &amp; components characteristic of a middle school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varied grouping &amp; scheduling techniques</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in the content area</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methods of individualized instruction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial reading</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4-6: Top Five Topics Chosen by Respondents to Include with General Education Course Work in a Middle Level Preparation Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics to Include With General Ed. Course Work</th>
<th>Number of Subjects</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy, purpose &amp; development of the middle level school</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion and mainstreaming</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional technology</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of individualized instruction</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial reading</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52
Table 4-7: Top Five Topics Chosen by Respondents to Include with Middle Level Course Work in a Middle Level Preparation Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics to Include with Middle Level Course Work</th>
<th>Number of Subjects</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#5 The programs &amp; Components characteristic of a true middle school.</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15 Field experience in a middle school</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Developmental needs of adolescents</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 Philosophy, purpose &amp; development of the middle level school</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8 Classroom management skills</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 4 - The philosophy, programs & development of the middle level school. (1.9%)

Item 5 - The programs & components characteristic of a middle school. (1.9%)

Item 6 - Varied grouping & scheduling techniques. (1.9%)

Item 7 - Team building, collaborative teaching & planning. (1%)

Item 10 - specialized content methods. (1%)

Item 11 - Philosophy of education. (1.9%)

Item 12 - Inclusion & mainstreaming (1.4%)

Item 13 - Ways to motivate the adolescent (1%)

Item 14 - Unit & lesson planning (1%)

Item 16 - Reading in the content area (1.9%)

Item 17 - Instructional technology (1%)

Item 18 - Methods of individualized instruction (1.9%)

Item 19 - Remedial reading (1.9%)

Table 4-6 reported the items which respondents chose most often as those topics which should be included in general teacher education course work within a professional middle level teacher preparation program. One hundred and sixty-five respondents, 78.9 percent, indicated that item 4 - philosophy, purpose and development of the middle level school, should be incorporated in the general education course work. One hundred and sixty-one respondents, 77 percent, indicated item 12 - inclusion and mainstreaming. One hundred and fifty-two respondents, 72.7 percent, chose item 17 - instructional technology. Item 18 - methods of individualized instruction, was chosen by 150 respondents, 71.8 percent, to be included with general
education course work, and last, 143 respondents, 68.4 percent, indicated item 19 - remedial reading.

Table 4-7 reported the items which respondents chose most often as those topics which should be included in middle level education courses within a professional middle level teacher preparation program. One hundred and sixty-one respondents, 77 percent, indicated that item 5 - the programs & components characteristic of a true middle school, should be incorporated in the general education course work. One hundred and forty-six respondents, 69.9 percent, indicated item 15 - field experience in a middle school. One hundred and thirty-two respondents, 63.2 percent, chose item 3 - developmental needs of adolescents. Item 4 - philosophy, purpose and development of the middle level school, was chosen by 125 respondents, 59.8 percent, to be included with general education course work, and last, 121 respondents, 57.9 percent, indicated item 8 - classroom management skills.

Current Programs in Tennessee Middle Schools

Data collected from part two of the survey questionnaire focused on the current programs in the respondents' middle schools in Tennessee and attempted to answer the following research questions:

2. Which programs, characteristic of a true middle school, were in place in Tennessee middle schools?

3. Which characteristic middle level program was most often implemented in Tennessee middle schools?

4. Which of the middle level programs currently in place did teachers' and principals' perceive to be effectively implemented?
Table 4-8 reports the percentage of responses to item categories which asked which programs had been successfully implemented at the respondents middle school. The researcher looked for the most frequently implemented middle level programs in Tennessee middle schools as indicated by the responses. All three of the groups, principals, teachers and Other, agreed that interdisciplinary teams were most often implemented. A greater percentage of principals, 74.1 percent, than teachers, 44.6 percent, and Others, 57.1 percent, chose the interdisciplinary team program as the most implemented. One of the respondents wrote on the survey that although teams were a part of his school, he did not feel that they were successfully implemented. Flexible scheduling was implemented second most often according to responses. Sixty-three percent of the principals, 24.6 percent of the teachers and 42.9 percent in the Other group chose flexible scheduling as the second most implemented middle level program in Tennessee schools.

Perceptions of the Proposed Middle Level Endorsement

Eighty-six percent of the respondents indicated favorably on Part II, item 21 which asked, What do you think about the idea of a separate middle level endorsement? Despite the favorable response, 21.3 percent indicated some reservation concerning the implementation of the new endorsement. The researcher expected some anxiety from respondents toward a middle level endorsement but made no assumptions about the reasons behind the reluctance. The majority of the principal respondents, fifty percent, responded favorably to the idea of a separate middle level endorsement.
Table 4-8: Top Two Middle Level Programs Implemented In Tennessee Middle Schools as Indicated by Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle Level Programs</th>
<th>% of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Scheduling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seventy-six percent of the teacher respondents, and 67 percent in the Other group responded favorably. There was no relationship between background (license or experience) and perception of the new endorsement. There was a greater percentage, 82 percent, of respondents holding elementary endorsements currently teaching in a middle school. Fifty percent of the respondents did not respond to item 21 (See Appendix C for a complete list of all responses to items 21).

Part II item 22 asked, Do you feel that "larger" (1-8 or 5-12) endorsements are appropriate; if so, which do you prefer? Why? Fifty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they felt that larger endorsements were appropriate. Of those respondents who answered yes to item 22, 17.3 percent indicated that a 1-8 or any combination of an elementary endorsement would be most appropriate, and 44 percent indicated that a 5-12 or any combination of a secondary endorsement would be most appropriate. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they did not agree that larger endorsements were appropriate. The majority indicated that larger endorsements would spread the teacher too thin and not allow for adequate training at the middle level. If a yes or no answer could not be clearly determined then the researcher placed the response in an undecided category. Only 9 percent of the respondents were undecided about the appropriateness of the larger endorsements (See Appendix D for a complete list of responses to Part II, item 22).

There was a relationship between license held and perception of the larger endorsement as determined by responses to item 22, but which can also be viewed through data collected from items 21 and 23. Those respondents holding an elementary license tended to believe that middle
level students were more like elementary students than secondary students. Therefore, practicing teachers seeking a middle level position should be trained in an elementary background. The same relationship could be seen with respondents holding secondary licenses. This group tended to believe that middle school students were more like high school students than elementary students. These respondents commented that preservice training should focus more on the secondary: discipline, motivation, and especially subject matter. The researcher looked specifically at those respondents who answered yes to item 22 and indicated that a 1-8 or another combination of an elementary endorsement would be most appropriate. Eighty-eight percent of these respondents held elementary endorsements (K-8 or 1-8, PreK-3). Of those respondents who indicated that a 5-12 endorsement was most appropriate, 92 percent currently held a secondary endorsement.

**Background**

It was important to the researcher to analyze data which focused on the background of the respondent in this final section. This included the respondents job description, professional experience, license(s) held, perceptions of length of student teaching experience and methods courses needed by practicing teachers. Data collected from part one of the questionnaire was described in Table 4-9, 4-10 and 4-11, and attempts to answer the following research question:

6. What specific training and middle level experience did the respondents hold?
### Table 4-9: Distribution of Respondents by Academic Rank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Rank</th>
<th>Number of Subjects at Each Rank</th>
<th>Percent of Subjects at Each Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>209</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4-10: Years of Middle Level Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Number of Subjects at Each Level</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects at Each Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4 Years</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-12 Years</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-20 Years</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ Years</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>209</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-11: Licenses Held by Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>License</th>
<th>Number of Subjects Holding Each License</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects Holding Each License</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 4-9, 27 subjects, or 12.9 percent of the 209 sample respondents, were ranked as middle level principals; 175 subjects, or 83.7 percent of the 209 sample respondents, were ranked as middle level teachers; and 7 subjects, or 3.4 percent of the 209 sample respondents, were ranked as Other. Those in this final category were identified as either a counselor, higher education personnel, or a psychologist.

Table 4-10 shows the middle level experience of the respondents. Fifty-four subjects, or 25.8 percent, have had 21 years or more middle level experience. Fifty-eight subjects, or 27.8 percent have had 13-20 years of middle level experience. Fifty-four subjects, or 25.8 percent have had 5-12 years of middle level experience, and 43 subjects, or 20.6 percent have had 1-4 years of middle level experience.

Ninety-nine percent of the respondents have not completed a professional middle level teacher education program from another state. Two of the respondents completed a middle level teacher education program during an undergraduate program—one in Kentucky and the other in Georgia. One of these respondents also received additional middle level training during a graduate program at Union College in Barbarville, Kentucky.

Table 4-11 shows the various licenses held by respondents. Thirty of the respondents, 14.4 percent, held a K-8 license, 58, or 27.8 percent, held a 1-8 license, and 61 or 29.2 percent held a 7-9 license. Sixty respondents, 27.8 percent, held other licenses including 4-8, K-12, Special Educator, and Administrator. It should be noted that some of the respondents held more than one license. Ninety-three percent of the respondents received their license(s) in Tennessee.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey study was organized in five chapters. Chapter one introduced and provided background information. Included in Chapter one was the background of the problem, the problem, the purpose, the population and sample, assumptions, limitations and delimitations and definition of terms.

Chapter two contained a review of related literature. This review of related literature was organized around the characteristics of middle level students, middle level programs, and the professional preparation for teachers in the middle level.

The methods and procedures used in this survey study were described in chapter three. In chapter three the development of the instrument, the design of the study, the population and sample procedures, the collection of the data and the treatment of the data were described.

Chapter four contained an analysis of the data. Data was analyzed in four sections defined by the purpose of the study. These four sections included middle level preparation programs, current programs in Tennessee middle schools, perceptions of the proposed middle level endorsement, and background information on the respondents.

Chapter five included the summary, conclusions and recommendations for further study. The conclusions were based on the four sections outlined and described in Chapter four and respond to the problem statement and research questions listed and described in chapter one.
Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of middle level educators in Tennessee concerning which areas of professional teacher training need to be addressed at the university level. Further, the study was concerned with the following in response to the initial research questions: (1) determining which programs, characteristic of a true middle school, were in place in Tennessee middle schools; (2) determining which characteristic middle level program was most often implemented in Tennessee middle schools; (3) assessing whether or not the respondents perceived the middle level programs currently in place to be effectively implemented; (4) identifying the concerns these middle level educators held surrounding the implementation of the middle level endorsement in Tennessee; and (5) collecting general demographic information about the respondents and their professional training.

A questionnaire was sent to a sample consisting of 300 from a population of 1223 members of the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools. Seventy percent, 209 respondents, from the sample of middle level principals, teachers, and Other educators, identified as higher educators, counselors and a psychologist, returned the survey questionnaire. This questionnaire was divided into two sections. Part I -- Background information, included rank (principal, teacher or other), years of experience, licenses held, and programs successfully implemented at the respondent's middle school. Part II -- Middle Level Preparation Programs, included length of student teaching experience needed by practicing teachers, what methods preparation practicing teachers should have, and items needed in a professional middle level preparation
Three additional questions in Part II provided respondents a place to discuss their perceptions of (1) the new middle level endorsement proposed in Tennessee, (2) the appropriateness of "larger" endorsements (1-8 or 5-12). The third question, #23, allowed for additional comments by respondents.

Conclusions

The conclusions for this study were based upon the data collected through the survey instrument from the 209 sample respondents which included middle level principals', teachers', and others as previously identified. The data were analyzed and the following conclusions serve as responses to the researchers initial questions which were:

1. What specific training of future middle level teachers current Tennessee middle level educators would like to see addressed at the university level?

2. Which programs, characteristic of a true middle school, were in place in Tennessee middle schools?

3. Which characteristic middle level program was most often implemented in Tennessee middle schools?

4. Which of the middle level programs currently in place did teachers' and principals' perceive to be effectively implemented?

5. What concerns did these middle level educators hold surrounding the implementation of the middle level endorsement in Tennessee?

6. What specific training and middle level experience did the respondents hold?
Middle Level Preparation Programs

The researcher wanted to determine the respondents' perceptions regarding length of student teaching experience each practicing teacher should have at the middle level. The majority of the respondents felt that a semester or more of student teaching experience was needed by practicing teachers. It was interesting to the researcher that more teachers than principals thought that at least a semester was more appropriate than a full year internship. The majority of respondents, 57 percent, in the Other group chose a full year internship over a semester of student teaching experience. The researcher concluded that this was due to the majority of the teachers who had graduated from Tennessee higher education institutions before the one year internship was instituted and had fulfilled at least a semester themselves. Also, it was concluded that due to the high percentage of response by teachers to a semester of student teaching experience that the respondents felt their own experience was adequate. Therefore, practicing teachers need only a semester of student teaching experience as well. It was also interesting that the majority of the respondents in the Other group were higher education professors and saw the relevance of a one year internship from an institutions point-of-view. The principals were evenly divided between a semester and a full year internship, and therefore it was concluded that they did not see a vast difference between these two categories in regards to length of student teaching experience. In a related inquiry, the researcher wanted to determine where field experience should be placed within a middle level teacher education program. The majority of the respondents agreed that field experience should be placed within middle
level course work in a professional middle level teacher preparation program. It was concluded that the respondents saw the benefit of practicing teachers seeking a degree in middle level education teaching in the middle level during their field experience.

The researcher was also concerned with determining what methods preparation each respondent perceived practicing teachers should have. All three groups agreed that practicing teachers needed more than one semester and more than one content area to teach at the middle level. The researcher concluded that the middle level educators needed to be trained in more than one content area and that would require more than one methods course. Middle level educators, in team situations, need to have the knowledge and skills from more than one content. For example, the English teacher and the social studies teacher often team teach. Each of the two teachers would need to be knowledgeable about both subjects.

The researcher was concerned with placement of various items within a middle level teacher preparation program. The following items were chosen by a majority of the respondents as those items which could be placed within general education course work.

1. Team building, collaborative teaching & planning
2. Specialized content methods
3. Philosophy of education
4. Inclusion & mainstreaming
5. Unit & lesson planning
6. Reading in the content area
7. Instructional technology
8. Methods of individualized instruction
9. Remedial reading

It was concluded that these items were those that all teachers could benefit from taking, regardless of the endorsement or specialization sought, and therefore should be placed in the general education course work.

The following were chosen by the respondents as those items which should be placed within middle level course work.

1. The developmental needs of adolescents
2. The philosophy, programs & development of the middle level school
3. The programs & components characteristic of a middle school
4. Varied grouping & scheduling techniques
5. Classroom management skills specific to adolescents
6. Ways to motivate the adolescent
7. Field experience a middle school

The researcher concluded that these items were specific to middle level educators and therefore should be placed within middle level course work. These items would better prepare practicing teachers wishing to teach adolescents in the middle grades.

Current Programs in Tennessee Middle Schools

The researcher wanted to determine which middle level programs the respondents perceived to be successfully implemented in their middle schools. Team teaching and flexible scheduling were successfully implemented in Tennessee middle schools according to responses. It was concluded that these two characteristic middle level programs were most often selected as those successfully implemented because incorporating them
doesn't require complex scheduling. Flexible scheduling also fits easily into teaming situations since the team provides varied grouping and scheduling techniques. Team teaching is frequently one of the first middle level programs to be instituted. "Perhaps the most widespread and commonly practiced organizational innovation in middle level schools is the use of interdisciplinary teaming" (Irvin, 1992, 86). These two programs aren't as "risky" as some of the others. For example, an organized and competitive sports program is standard in the majority of schools. The implementation of an intramural program would do away with competitive sports. It can also be concluded from comments written directly on the survey by a few of the respondents that more information is needed to determine if the programs currently in place in Tennessee middle schools are actually implemented successfully, and this would need to be reevaluated once more people are educated about these individual programs.

Perceptions of the Proposed Middle Level Endorsement

The researcher was concerned with determining what respondents thought about a separate middle level endorsement. Despite the favorable response, 21.3 percent indicated some reservation concerning the implementation of the new endorsement. The majority of the principal respondents, fifty percent, responded favorably to the idea of a separate middle level endorsement. Seventy-six percent of the teacher respondents, and 67 percent in the Other group responded favorably. The researcher concluded from the written responses of the respondents that the majority of the reservations were concerned with the issue of

69
job availability. The respondents are concerned that the smaller endorsement, 5-8 instead of K-8 or 1-8 for example, would narrow their chances for employment. Many of the respondents commented that they felt the middle level endorsement was long overdue, but were concerned that they would have to change their current appointment or would be forced to teach at a lower grade. The researcher concluded that if the respondents knew that their jobs would not be in jeopardy there would be less fear involved in the addition of the middle level endorsement. There was also a concern that the narrow 5-8 endorsement would discourage practicing teachers from entering the middle level program. It could be concluded that the course work specific to middle level educators could be taken at the end of the program to allow for practicing teachers to determine which area, elementary, middle or secondary, best fits their interest.

Last, there was a relationship between license(s) held and perception of the larger endorsement as determined by responses to item 22 but, which can also be viewed through data collected from items 21 and 23. After analyzing the data, the researcher concluded that those respondents holding an elementary license tended to believe that middle level students were more like elementary students than secondary students and, therefore, practicing teachers seeking a middle level position should be trained in an elementary background. The same relationship could be seen with respondents holding secondary licenses. This group tended to believe that middle school students were more like high school students than elementary students. These respondents commented that preservice training should focus more on the secondary: discipline, motivation, and especially subject matter. The
researcher looked specifically at those respondents who answered yes to item 22 and indicated that a 1-8 or another combination of an elementary endorsement would be most appropriate. Eighty-eight percent of these respondents held elementary endorsements (K-8 or 1-8, PreK-3). Of those respondents who indicated that a 5-12 endorsement was most appropriate, 92 percent currently held a secondary endorsement. It was concluded despite the beliefs of each group, elementary and secondary, the disagreement indicates that adolescents fall somewhere in the middle of the two groups. This is supported by Schurr (1995, p. 1) who labels adolescents as, "members of another tier in education." Middle school students are neither elementary or secondary students; their developmental characteristics mark them as unique.

Background

The researcher wanted to determine the background of the respondents. This included rank, years of middle level experience, education, and license(s) held. It was found that the majority of the respondents were teachers and had been teaching at the middle level for more than 13 years. The majority of the respondents held elementary licenses (K-8 and / or 1-8). The investigator concluded that the respondents were experienced middle level educators.
Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendations for further study as determined by the researcher are as follows:

1. It was recommended that further research include a follow-up study one or two years after the implementation of the middle level endorsement which focuses on principals' and teachers' perceptions of the endorsement.

2. The researcher recommended that further research include an interview study with current middle level educators to determine perceptions of the proposed endorsement. The current study could have benefited from an additional interview to achieve more in-depth responses.

3. It was recommended that additional research include a study of which endorsement, elementary, middle or secondary, is the preferred endorsement for teachers to hold as perceived by administrators' or other personal responsible for hiring teachers at the middle level. This additional research would support or refute the concerns upheld by many of the respondents in the current study.

4. The researcher recommended that researchers continue to study the perceptions of principals and teachers toward the professional preparation of middle level educators. The subjects in this study represented a select group of middle level educators in the state of Tennessee.

5. It was recommended that researchers investigate the perceptions of K-12 educators toward higher education institutions and the State
Department of Education. Many of the respondents in the current study indicated a lack of trust and belief in current training practices, and responded negatively about requirements currently needed to obtain an endorsement in Tennessee.

6. Further investigation on whether or not teachers are better prepared when they have completed a teacher preparation program which includes an internship of at least a year or an extended student teaching experience of more than one semester was recommended by the researcher. A majority of the respondents in the current study indicated that more than one semester was adequate time spent in a student teaching experience, but a large percentage indicated that an internship was the second choice for preparation.

7. Additional research should include a study of teachers who finished a middle level teacher preparation program and who taught for at least one year at the middle level to determine their perceptions of the effectiveness of the preparation program to their teaching experience, and how applicable they perceive their training to be on their overall teaching experience.
References
References


Cawelti, G. (1989, December). What America needs in its school graduates. Speech to the Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development's Middle Level Education Institute, Williamsburg, VA.


Appendixes
Appendix A

Cover Letter and Survey
April 18, 1997

Dear Middle Level Educators:

Tennessee is currently revising the elementary endorsements to include K-8, Pre K-4 and 5-8—wonderful news for middle level educators and the students who will ultimately benefit from professionally trained middle level teachers. Once the new middle level endorsement is complete, colleges and universities in Tennessee must create a program designed to meet the endorsement standards. I am a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee—Knoxville, and am very interested in the development of these professional middle level teacher preparation programs. The specific purpose of this study is to determine middle level principals' and teachers' perceptions on which areas of professional training should be addressed at the college or university level. The results of this study will be made available to the education departments to aid in the development of these new programs. Your participation, although completely optional, would strengthen the results of this study by supplying your valuable opinion.

It will take no more than five minutes to read the statements and complete the survey.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope by April 30, 1997. I realize that your schedule is extremely busy, but I know that with your interest in middle level education you will want to help promote and shape the future of the middle level teacher preparation program as much as I do. Completion of this survey grants your permission to participate in the study. Your responses will be kept completely confidential, and only cumulative data will be reported. The study has been approved by the University of Tennessee's Research with Human Subjects review committee.

I want to thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If you have any further questions, please contact me by e-mail <dodieb@utkux.utcc.utk.edu>, or at my UT office 423-974-8143.

Thank You,

Dodie L. Boren
PART ONE - BACKGROUND

Directions: Please answer the following questions. Check one box only.

1. I am a ☐ Teacher ☐ Principal

2. Indicate your years of middle level experience. Include current year.
   □ 1-4 years  □ 5-12 years  □ 13-20 years  □ 21 years or more

3. Where did you receive your professional preparation? Please indicate the state(s) and institution(s).

4. Which license(s) do you hold? □ K-8  □ 1-8  □ 5-8  □ 7-12  □ Other __________

5. Have you completed a middle level teacher education program from another state? □ Yes □ No

6. If you answered No to question 5 go to question 7. If Yes, indicate the level of education in which you completed this program.
   □ Undergraduate State & institution __________________________
   □ Graduate State & institution ______________________________

7. Which of the following programs do you feel have been successfully implemented at your middle school?
   Check all that apply. □ Flexible Scheduling □ Teacher Guidance Program
   □ Team Teaching □ Exploratory Program
   □ Intramural Program □ Other- please list

PART TWO - MIDDLE LEVEL PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Directions: Put a check in the box which corresponds most closely with your answer.

1. Please indicate the length of student teaching experience you would prefer each practicing teacher receive at the middle level.
   □ 6-12 Weeks  □ Full year internship
   □ At least a semester  □ Other Please indicate __________
2. What methods preparation should middle level educators have? Choose one only.

- No methods courses
- A single methods course (3-6 hours)
- One semester / more than 1 content area
- More than 1 semester/ more than 1 content

None = Teachers Enrolled in a Middle Level Preparation Program do not need training related to this topic.
Gen. Ed = Teachers Enrolled in a Middle Level Preparation Program should receive training related to this topic during their general education course work. Not necessarily in a separate course.
Midd. L. = Teachers Enrolled in a Middle Level Preparation Program should receive training related to this topic during their middle level course work. Not necessarily in a separate course.

3. The developmental needs of adolescents.

4. The philosophy, purpose and development of the middle level school.

5. The programs & components characteristic of a true middle school (e.g.) core, exploratory, teacher guidance, intramurals, flexible scheduling.

6. Varied grouping & scheduling techniques

7. Team building, collaborative teaching & planning

8. Classroom management skills (discipline) specific to adolescents

9. A concentration in a specialized content area.

10. Specialized content methods

11. Philosophy of education

12. Inclusion and mainstreaming

13. Ways to motivate the adolescent.

14. Unit and Lesson Planning

15. Field experience in a middle school.

16. Reading in the content area

17. Instructional technology

18. Methods of individualized instruction.

19. Remedial reading

20. Other? ____________________________
21. What do you think about the idea of a separate middle level endorsement?

22. Do you feel that "larger" (1-8 or 5-12) endorsements are appropriate; if so, which do you prefer? Why?

23. Additional Comments.
Appendix B

Map of Tennessee with Regional Divisions
Appendix C

Subjects Responses to Part III, Item 21
Concerning a Separate Middle Level Endorsement
### Subject Responses to Part III, Item 21
Concerning a Separate Middle Level Endorsement

**Item 21: What do you think about the idea of a separate middle level endorsement?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I feel it would and is better than my endorsement in K-12, beginning 7-12 Master K-8. Thus, I feel more emphasis could be placed on specific needs in middle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>It is an excellent idea and long past due.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tennessee needs a separate middle level endorsement. I would give hiring preference to a teacher who holds the new endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I feel that my experience and training (1-8) have helped me understand and contribute more to the integrated learning program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>OK. If it's grandfathered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>A very needed endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I think a middle level endorsement will better prepare educators to work with these students. However, I do not think that middle school teachers should become specialists in one area. A middle school teacher needs to see the whole child through the whole picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I am against it. It is too limiting for teacher movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Desperately needed—long over due in TN. It will enrich student performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I feel it is about time TN endorsed teachers in this area. This way, only people who are truly interested in the middle school child will receive the endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Not necessarily needed, but acceptable. More training in content is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>It's about time! Make sure you include information on inclusion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
28. I endorse. Much time should be spent reading about & working with this age
group prior to citing it as a concentration area. An educator must truly like this
age group; if not, teaching them will be miserable.

33. Definitely for it! It is much needed to ensure that students at the middle level
receive appropriate instruction and that they have teachers and administrators who
understand the nature of the pre-adolescent.

36. I support it!

37. I'm in favor of a 5-8 endorsement. Middle school students are a special breed. A
commitment to a 5-8 certification would also indicate a commitment to the special
needs of these kids!

38. I don't think the endorsement issue is the problem or the solution. This type of
survey is frequently used because it is easier to work with endorsement than it is
the real problem. Instruction is the key issue. Just because you select a 1-8,
middle level or 5-12 does not say anything about the quality, appropriateness and
success of the approach. Let's worry less about the formation and more about the
execution. Let's use the internship to create a need to know then provide real live
solutions by practitioners, not more college courses.

39. A middle level concentration within a larger endorsement should be considered.
From the standpoint of the job applicant, a 5-8 endorsement would be limiting. In
addition, middle level schools include such a widely varying ranging of grades that
it would be difficult to restrict the endorsement to a narrow grade range. The goal
of the department should be to send out well-educated, intelligent persons with the
subject matter knowledge and skills needed to provide middle-level students with a
sound education.

44. Wonderful! We are a different animal.

45. There are too many different grade level combinations that are classified as middle
school. For example, some schools have 7-8, some 6-8, some 5-6 some 5-7 some
6-9 some 4-8, etc.

47. Middle level education endorsement is needed.

48. Great!

52. A Positive Step!

55. I like it!
57. Great—if preservice teachers have a legitimate experience in course work, field experience and student teaching.

58. No response.

61. It is very needed: most of us teacher now have only a secondary or only elementary certification. I was not prepared adequately to teach at this grade level; I've had only "on the job" training, seminars, etc. some of the course work should focus heavily on the developmental needs (emotional, etc.) of adolescents, as well as motivational techniques, discipline, etc. The Lee Canter course work has been very beneficial to me.

68. No response.

72. I think it would be very helpful to have middle school teachers specially trained to handle the middle school challenge: hormones, expectations, team cooperation, etc.

75. Good idea to be more specialized, but it would be too difficult to find a job. I support more classes on middle school discipline and motivation strategies, but not a separate endorsement.

76. No Response.

77. I feel it needs to be implemented.

78. Yes.

80. I think that in most cases a 1-8 endorsement qualifies a teacher to do a good job teaching 5th or 6th grade & most of the subjects in 7th. In order to do justice to 8th grade subjects, I feel a more intense knowledge of their subject is needed. some 1-8 certified teachers through years of experience etc. can transcend any grade and achieve success. This however is not true of all teachers.

82. I think it is important for someone who is teaching at the middle school level to be aware and trained to meet the special needs of the middle school student. I don't feel the need for a separate middle level endorsement.

85. I feel the middle school should be with high school. See response to #22.

90. OK- We need teachers in middle school that are capable and knowledgeable about the subject (math, science, etc.) that they are teaching. We get elementary teachers that are assigned to teach 7th/8th advanced classes and the kids know more than they do!
97. Middle level endorsement would better prepare the educator in relating to philosophy and instructional goals of a "true" middle school. However, having a more global exposure to materials and methods in varying degrees allows the teacher to select the most appropriate age of students with which the educator feels most comfortable teaching.

98. This is a good idea if one wants to work only with middle level students. However, the availability of jobs might be a hold back for this endorsement. Also, students coming into middle school are as varied according to maturity level and academically.

100. Don't need it. Maybe a psych. class for behavior.

101. I think it is a needed endorsement. These students have special needs emotional, social, and academic. The adolescents are uncertain as to the "group" they belong and need a lot of guidance.

102. The middle school is so different and the students needs so varied that it needs to be studied by itself. There could be larger endorsements with a special endorsement in middle school.

103. One advantage may be that it would explore the world of the adolescent and perhaps develop more techniques and strategies. One disadvantage that may occur is that we become too specialized in our training and not stay attuned to the fact that not all students enter adolescence at the same time.

107. I am a special education teacher (1-8). I cannot answer this question adequately. I think; however, it would be very beneficial.

108. Helpful to students -- limiting to teachers.

109. The middle school age group is unique and should be treated separately.

110. Good Idea!

113. This might be appropriate. Middle school students are definitely different (not necessarily in a bad way) and need someone who can deal with these differences.

115. Good Idea! Teachers need the preparation for "middle schools."

116. I think it's a good idea—but too limiting. with the job hunt becoming increasingly more difficult, I don't see this as beneficial.

117. Agree.
123. I think it's a good idea.

124. I think that having a separate middle level endorsement would be very beneficial to new students.

125. It may help.

127. It would not be a bad idea. Middle school is quite different from either elementary or secondary.

128. Middle school children are an area like no other. It would have benefited me to have had a more concentrated course of study in middle school needs and characteristics.

129. When we changed to a middle school the staff that had the hardest time adjusting were the ones with 7-12 subject-area endorsements. M.S. endorsements would provide better training for this unique setting.

130. I think it is a very good idea and is worthy of consideration. The middle level child is so unique that it would be beneficial to have an endorsement for this level.

131. A good idea.

133. Good idea to have training available for specific educational stages, but narrow training and certification limits teachers and administrators in job placement.

136. Too specific and limiting.

138. If the endorsements are 5-12 a special middle (5-8) wouldn't be necessary.

139. I think it is an excellent idea.

140. Would limit level a person could teach.

147. Any effort to improve middle level educators would be appropriate. The uniqueness of this age child is important to know and understand.

149. Since middle schoolers are such a unique group, I think this would be an excellent idea.

151. It should be available to us.

154. Sounds great
160. Unnecessary bureaucracy.

163. Probably a good idea.

168. Very much needed for teachers and administrators if we are to maintain any of the middle school philosophy — We, in Knox county, have been steadily, since 1977, going away from middle school concepts/philosophies in an attempt (in my opinion) to please our god, T-CAPS.

172. I am wholeheartedly in favor of this.

176. I think it is great. Some teachers have Jr. High endorsements and are limited to teaching grades 7 and 8 in a middle school setting.

179. I think it would be important for people who want to teach in that level. It may motivate more people to want to teach middle school if there is more specialized preparation.

183. I think it is a great idea but if it is not possible I would have liked to take more classes that focused on the middle school students.

185. I really feel a content oriented endorsement would be more effective. I see people teaching science or English at the level 8th or lower and they don't have a mastery of it themselves. It's hard to teach what you don't know.

187. Excellent, we need more training.

191. This is a much needed endorsement.

200. I think it is an excellent idea.

213. I think it is not a bad idea, but I do not believe it should be mandatory. The demand to teach this age group is not great.

221. It was bound to happen!

228. As an elementary (1-8) teacher in middle school teaching with 3 secondary certified teachers, on a 4 member team, I think middle level endorsement sounds great. I have had to learn to think secondary and prepare these middle school students for high school not really knowing a lot about how to prepare them. I had to many elementary Ed classes.
It's important to have as many courses as possible that are specifically addressing an area of interest—to study—to master—to learn as many practical applications as possible that work with an age group before employment.

Because of the rapid change to middle level schools from the traditional Jr. High setting - a separate middle level endorsement is imperative. Today, most of the traditional teachers have little or no middle school preparation.

Don't need it.

I don't like the limitations this puts on a teacher. A teacher may want more variety than this endorsement affords. I do like the emphasis and knowledge that would be gained by more course work in a middle level endorsement.

It has merit. There are a lot of middle school specifics (thematic units, discipline help) that formal training could address.

Yes! A great idea.

My daughter has one from another state and I do feel there needs to be a separate endorsement, since this is such a different philosophy from high school and elementary, it needs to be recognized.

A separate middle level endorsement would be excellent. However, my school system does not (seem to) bother with any endorsement or degree that is not mandated by the state for a particular position to be filled.

Good Idea. It would allow you to specialize in much the same way that you can specialize in a subject. I would like to teach math, but I would not want high school.

Good idea. Should have been available some time ago.

Fine, but then the teacher is really limited.

Not needed.

It is a good idea. Teaching middle level students is a completely different ball game.

I think a separate endorsement would give more credibility to the middle level.

A separate M.L.E. is appropriate.
285. Not at the exclusion of the lower grades! In Memphis you never know where you will be assigned.

287. Good idea, discipline in the middle school is very difficult—Behavior modification with emphasis on middle grades is necessary.

289. I think it is necessary. The K-8 certificate does not address the needs of middle school curriculum. More emphasis needs to be given to subject areas. Many teachers with a K-8 certificate do not feel confident to teach certain areas, such as math.

293. If a person is sure about staying in the middle level grades, the training would be very beneficial. However, the training could also be too limiting.

295. It would be fine if it is not the only endorsement.

297. I like it.
Appendix D

Subjects Responses to the Survey Question Concerning Larger Endorsements
Subject Responses to Part III, Item 22
Concerning Larger Endorsements

Item 22: Do you feel that "larger" (1-8 or 5-12) endorsements are appropriate; if so, which do you prefer? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I do not feel these are appropriate. The skills and content needed to teach high school seniors is quite different from that needed for 5th grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>For the rural areas, I think we must have 1-8 endorsements. The 5-12 endorsement is not appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Maybe. 1-8 so courses have a less &quot;Jr. High&quot; environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I don't think that a larger endorsement is appropriate. I believe that under the 1-8 endorsement, preservice teachers should be given specialized training to work with middle school aged children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>K-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>K-4, 5-8 or 5-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>No, I don't. That would that we have a different variation of what we have now. I feel that a 5-8 endorsement is large enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Yes, to provide more flexibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Endorse more specialized such as 6-8 or 5-9 or any combination of these.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>No, but if offered I would chose 1-8 because the methods of elementary are more suitable than secondary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>5-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>When hiring, I prefer K-8 to 6-12 or 5-12. High school attitudes don't meet middle school needs as well as elementary trained teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
33. The answer to #21 applies here.

36. The 5-12 endorsement should provide a stronger grounding in subject matter for the prospective teacher. Within this larger endorsement methods and philosophies for middle school can be emphasized.

37. Yes. Only if truly trained.

38. I prefer the endorsements K-4, 3-8, and 7-12. If a person goes to college 4 or 5 years to prepare to teach, they should have endorsement in more than 3 grade levels.

39. No. The needs of each developmental level are different and require different teaching strategies and philosophies. I prefer K-5, 6-8, 9-12.

44. NO.

45. No—not necessarily—the structure of the teacher edu. programs makes the difference. Retaining the K-8 licensure may become necessary and wise.


48. I prefer 1-8 endorsements. When I graduated I was certified K-8. At our school the 6th grade wing uses blocks and team teaching. Each teacher has two subjects. The 7th and 8th grade teachers teach one subject.

61. Teachers should have the option of combining endorsements, but I think separate endorsements are preferable, because the preparation of teachers needs to be specific to the age level they'll be teaching.

68. Teachers need greater flexibility in career movements.

72. I think 5-12 endorsements would be better.

75. 1-5, 6-12. Middle & high school problems are very similar-discipline. Motivation.

76. Yes.

77. Education majors should work at all levels at some point early in their educational program. By the junior year, they should choose either K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12.

78. No.
A 5-12 endorsement or a 1-8 endorsement gives a teacher seeking a position more flexibility in the job market. I have used some of my skills, knowledge & experienced gained from teaching 1st & 6th grade to my 8th graders. I've also used my curriculum knowledge partially acquired from my 7-12 certification so to say which of these is more beneficial is difficult.

1-8. I feel that most of my training and experience has prepared me to teach at any of these grade levels. I don't wish to have my options narrowed to just say 5-8. My experience covers pre-school through adult ed.

I feel that endorsements should be 1-5 (ele) 6-12 (middle/high) - middle schools, at least the way they are structured in Knox county, are much more like high school for both students & teachers than elementary school.

5-12 Please!!!

Endorsements such as 1-8 are more appropriate because the teacher is exposed to much more diverse situations during college courses requiring observations, practicums, etc. This exposure allows the future teacher to experience various styles that may be adapted regardless of the students' ages.

I have a large endorsement which has enabled me to teach on different grade levels. I think this has made me a better teacher.

Yes, because it allows teachers to teach a wider variety & insures that the job market will be there. I also believe that too much specialization can narrow our abilities & isolate us.

In special education, it really doesn't matter to me.

Yes, how about 7-12. 5th grade is not middle level.

Larger endorsements are appropriate in case a teacher decides that middle school is not the grade level they should be teaching.

I prefer 5-12 endorsement for my area which is family and consumer science.
115. Yes, 5-12 is more needful of higher level content knowledge.

117. 5-8 or 4-8

124. I think it would be better for teachers to focus on a more specific age group. 
   ie) 1-4, 5-8, 9-12

125. No, too large of area.

127. Prefer that endorsements be broken down—elementary, middle, secondary.
   Students at each level are unique. Problems / characteristics seem to go with each
   age group.

128. No, it spreads the preparation for each too thin. I have a K-9 license. After
   teaching kindergarten for 15 years it took a lot of reading and courage to move to
   middle school. at times I have felt my preparation could have been better.

129. From an administrative view, larger is easier because of staff reassignments.

130. No. (6-9) endorsement.

131. Yes, 5-12.

133. Yes, 5-12. I believe training for ages 10-18 is more appropriate for middle level
   than training geared to student ages 6-13. Because student groups at any age level
   contain such a variety of intellectual, emotional, and social maturity levels, I
   believe narrow certification is unnecessarily limiting for teachers seeking jobs and
   administrators making teacher placement decisions. Wide grade level
   endorsements developmental levels would be most appropriate, in my opinion,
   especially in smaller schools and systems.

136. Yes. 5-12 for middle school educators.

138. Yes, the larger would seem to work well. Subjects are taught by department—
   TCAPS are by subject it would help it had a larger view at the subject you taught.

139. I feel they would be available for interested persons.

140. Would open more doors to teaching positions.

147. With the trend in middle schools to go to elementary—trained persons, it seems a
   5-8 grade endorsement might be appropriate.

149. 5-12 - Since teachers need to be more prepared to teach content.
151. No. Current levels are fine.

160. Elementary and High school

163. I prefer 5-12 because - I think - most teachers "evolve" in their desires and needs to teach at different levels during their careers. At the moment, I am working with 5th and 6th graders successfully -- last year, I was senior advisor -- I have thoroughly enjoyed both . . . I never thought I would like 5th and 6th so much.

172. 5-12. We need to be sensitive to job opportunities for teachers. I do think 5-12 gives teachers enough of the elementary flavor they must have to teach m.s. successfully.

176. No.

179. No, I have K-12 in special ed. When I started middle school teaching, I was thankful to have a teaching job, but I felt I would go back to elementary where I had been previously. I would have felt better prepared with middle school preparation.

183. Once again I feel we need to move away from the idea that one person can teach all subjects. If I were at that level I know I would spend most of my time on the subjects I like--English and social studies. I saw a fifth grade teacher label "was" as a pronoun!

185. 5-12 --Need to concentrate on teens and preteens not younger children.

187. No.

200. I feel large endorsements are fine, but schools should offer the teachers the opportunity to specialize by offering age specific courses. (eg. 1-4 or 5-8)

221. No, I do not feel that larger endorsements are appropriate. The middle school years are the most important, especially 8th grade where they have to pick high school courses in March and think about courses at the end of their 8th grade year. I feel the students would benefit from 5-8 endorsed teachers. The teachers who have this endorsement could focus in on this age group and better meet their needs.

228. I don't prefer the "larger" because a sprinkling of information just doesn't offer adequate preparation. Learning by experience is very, very frustrating. I prefer a more specialized focus.
236. I feel that the 5-12 endorsements will allow the teacher the opportunity to teach on the elementary, middle level, and high school level as the need may be.

247. 1-8.

254. I like the larger endorsement because it gives more flexibility for the teacher.

256. There are a lot of "larger" endorsed teachers that have made the transition just fine. I really hate to see a teacher spend a lot of time on middle school endorsement to see the whims of education re-conceptualize 5-8 into elementary then junior high schools. Excessive extra class work could discourage future teachers from pursuing middle school endorsement.

259. No.

263. I feel that three but overlapping endorsements would be best. 1-7, 6-9, 8-12. This would train teachers to work with more specific development groups while leaving teacher mobility at a reasonable level.

269. No, too many courses would be necessary.

271. I do not have an opinion.

275. Yes, 1-8 Middle based on previous exp.

276. Yes, 5-12 or 1-8 either.

278. If "larger" endorsements are sought, the 1-8 level is more appropriate. This age group is really closer to K-5 levels than 9-12.

280. Perhaps a double endorsement would be more justifiable. Many philosophical concepts and methodologies are applicable to more than one age group.

281. Yes. (refer to answer 21)

285. NO!

289. I feel that larger endorsements are appropriate. Probably 1-8 would be better since the emphasis in middle level grades is shifting to more interdisciplinary teaching.

293. There should still be "larger" endorsement because if the areas or grade levels that you might be certified for in a smaller endorsement might not have openings to transfer or secure employment. There should be specialized areas in these "larger" areas.
295. Yes
Appendix E

Subjects Responses to Part III, Item 23
Concerning Additional Comments
Subject Responses to Part III, Item 23
Concerning Additional Comments

Item 23: Additional comments?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I researched middle school education when writing my dissertation. This may &quot;color&quot; my opinions. I have found that elementary teachers are more flexible and creative when working with middle school kids. When a teacher becomes a &quot;specialist&quot; in a subject, it is difficult for that teacher to teach the child rather than teach the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Would be interested to see how many responses you receive and the results of your survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Staff development and practical experiences are the best and most appropriate ways to train new teachers. We need to teach students as they need to know. I would prefer a two year internship and three years of college to the current system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Strong programs stressing the real substance of middle school philosophy are needed for prospective teachers, aspiring administrators, and potential supervisory personnel. Up to this point, many schools which have gone to a &quot;middle school&quot; organization have done so without the needed preparation of teaching staff and administrators. A major concern of this respondent is the anti-intellectual, non-academic atmosphere seen as required for middle school because of lack of solid grounding in middle school philosophy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>The middle school also needs to address the social/emotional needs of the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>An educational program specific to the needs of middle level educators is very important and has long been overlooked in our colleges and universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>We need to work toward MS certification in TN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.</td>
<td>Our middle schools should have more programs offered to prepare students for High school and beyond—social skills, child care, sex education, domestic skills, cultural opportunities (drama, piano).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.</td>
<td>If the music certification would be limited in grade level, it would be extremely difficult to find a job. It is hard getting a job now with K-12 certificate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
80. The adolescent and their parents are unique. Some students are still very immature while others are older and more worldly way beyond their years.

97. I would like to see the 1-8 endorsements continued with more emphasis in middle level grades.

110. Today's middle school students come to us with a lot of "baggage." Many have problems and live in situations that many of us have difficulty understanding. Because of this I believe that the area of guidance and counseling should be in the curriculum. This along with conflict resolution would be greatly beneficial. I also believe that field experience should be included early on and not left until the junior or senior year. This would help students determine if teaching, whatever the level, was really what they wanted to do.

115. In general, I think education programs are overly burdensome. I think the valuable experience comes from in class experience within a school. Methods, psychology, and all the other stuff should be taught concurrently during the first semester of internship (ex) 3 days in school, 3 days in class. The second semester the intern would teach full time. With the state of education as it is (low pay, high stress) highly skilled people aren't attracted to it. Some of the ones that are turned off by the burdensomeness of all the requirements at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

128. I am in a 6th to 8th grade middle school. Sixth grade is very difficult to work into that setting. I teach reading in sixth grade. Most of the material I can find is geared toward a self-contained classroom or a mostly self-contained. Our students change for all classes. They have six different teachers. This is an area that needs to be explored.

160. 1. Gifted children are neglected.
2. Grade inflation is a concern in education classes.
3. Discipline is the main issue that needs addressing. Teachers and students will thrive in a safe, learning environment.

176. I have been on the ad hoc committee for the State Depart. of Ed which has spent many hours on this effort. Not having had middle level preparation specifically for myself, I see so much could be learned before on the job training takes over. I wish the universities much success in developing appropriate programs.

200. I am certified to teach 1-8, but would never consider teaching first grades. I wish I had more age (middle school) specific course work.

221. I feel the students would benefit from, 5-8 endorsements of teachers. The teachers who have this endorsement could focus in on this age group and better meet their
needs. There are big differences from 5-6 and 7-8 even 8 by itself. 5-6 more elementary 7th graders are a breed of their own. 8th they are getting prepared for a future thinking of careers and planning for high school education. I have taught 2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th, and now 8th. I enjoy the middle school best!!!

275. This survey seems to be biased toward creating mid-level endorsement.

281. Teachers need to learn some things about middle school before they become a middle school teacher!
Vita

Dodie Lynn Jarvis Boren was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on June 1, 1968. She graduated from Eureka Senior High in June 1986. In December, 1991, she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary English Education from Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. In May, 1995, after two years of graduate work, she completed a Master of Arts degree in Educational Processes with an emphasis in Middle Level Education from Maryville University in St. Louis, Missouri.

In December of 1995 her husband, Craig Dean Boren, was transferred to Knoxville, Tennessee, with his job at Kendall Health Care. Mrs. Boren viewed this transfer as the opportunity to pursue her educational goals. She enrolled at the University of Tennessee--Knoxville and completed a Doctor of Education degree with a major in Curriculum and Instruction. She graduated summa cum laude in December 1997.

Her professional experience includes four years at the middle level (grades 7-9) in Language Arts classrooms for Rockwood School District in St. Louis, Missouri. She taught for one year at Morgan Selvidge Middle School and three years at LaSalle Springs Middle School. She worked as a graduate assistant for the College of Education in the Curriculum Laboratory at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, for one year. Mrs. Boren accepted a position in August, 1997, with the Parkway School District in St. Louis, Missouri.

Mrs. Boren is a member of the National Council of Teachers of English, National Middle School Association, Tennessee Association of
Middle Schools, Missouri Middle School Association and the International Reading Association.