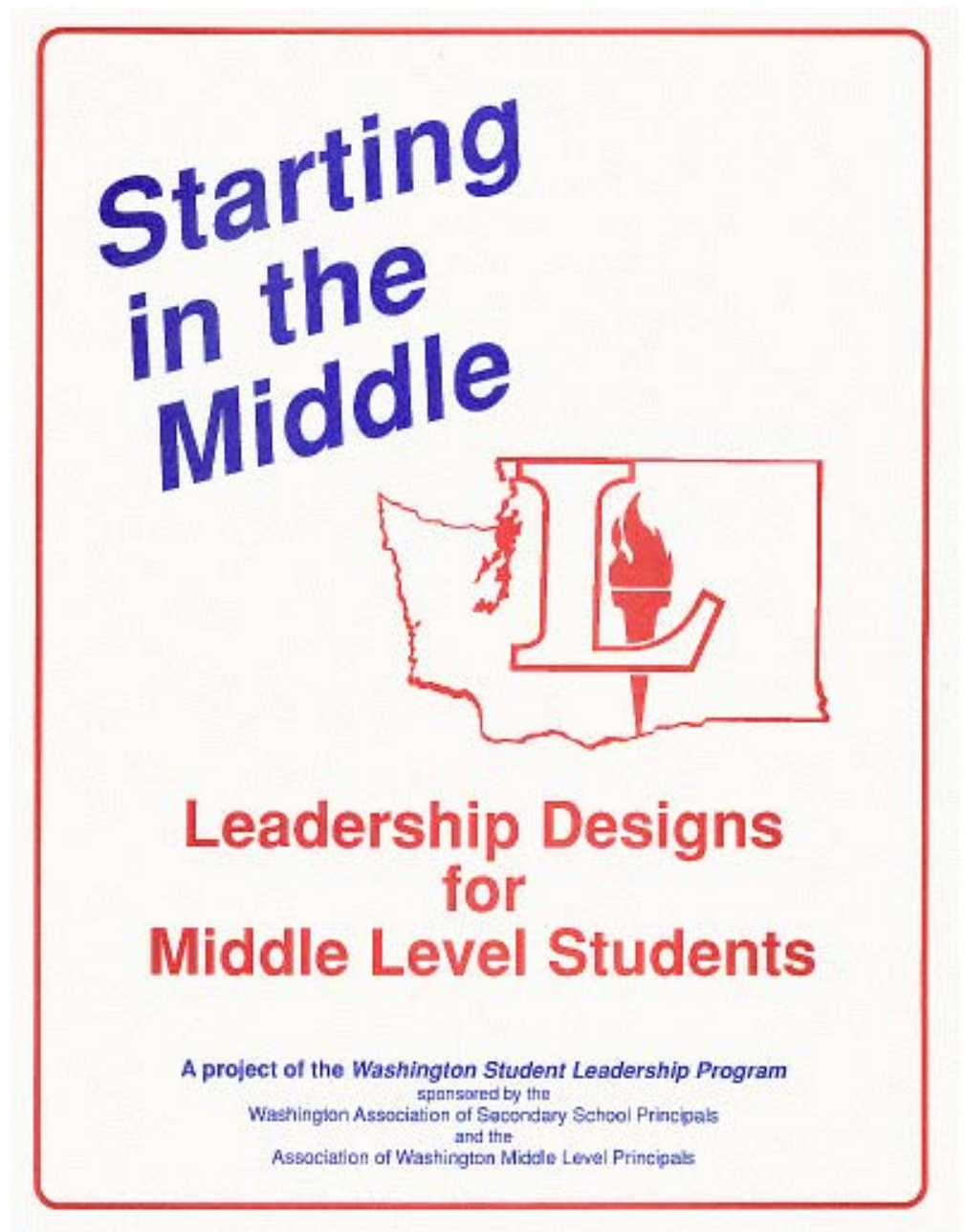


“Starting in the Middle”

Leadership Designs for Middle Level Students

- “Starting in the Middle” has been designed as a source book for teaching leadership concepts to middle level students.
- To accommodate an advisory setting as well as a leadership class the majority of these lessons have been written in 15-minute blocks, which can be combined to form a daily lesson.
- The format of this guide was designed to allow you the flexibility to teach a single lesson when needed, or a complete unit as the calendar dictates.
- The appendix contains sample course outlines and constitutions, which may be helpful as you create or restructure the leadership program in your school.



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Starting in the Middle: *Leadership Designs for Middle Level Students*

INTRODUCTION:

Creating one leadership book to meet the myriad needs of the school systems serving middle level students would be similar to creating one tent to fit every-sized circus—yet that is exactly what a group of us did. With the crisp, winter woods of the Cispus Learning Center as our backdrop, and Susan Fortin, Association of Washington School Principal's Leadership Specialist, as our ringmaster, we defined a middle level leadership philosophy, shared our “best” lessons and wrote, wrote, wrote.

We used a circus metaphor to explain our philosophy of middle level leadership: We, the teachers of middle level students, must be a combination of clown and lion tamer to survive in the middle. Our students range in their leadership readiness. Some are excited to be cheering in the audience, while others are willing to soar on the trapeze—without a net! Below are a few underpinnings—tent ropes if you will—to help organize and bind your leadership program together. However you choose to apply “Starting in the Middle” to your own unique circus, remember to cinch those tent ropes tight and create for your middle level students “The Greatest Show on Earth”!

A CIRCUS WELCOMES ALL

Develop an inclusive rather than exclusive middle level leadership program. Involving as many students as possible is the goal.

A CIRCUS SPOTLIGHTS A VARIETY OF ACTS AND SKILLS

Allow room for low risk and high risk experiences—from making posters to speaking at an assembly—and allow room for students to explore as many experiences as possible.

A CIRCUS MAKES US FEEL GOOD

Middle level students need high doses of self-esteem.

A CIRCUS USES NETS

Provide guided support that encourages responsibility, fosters student success, and quickly bounces the students back from a fall.

A CIRCUS IS A HODGEPODGE OF PEOPLE WORKING IN HARMONY

Promote teambuilding, empathy, service and an understanding of how student leadership fits into the big picture.

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Washington Student Leadership

Washington Student Leadership is a program of the Washington School Principals Education Foundation

Students involved in programs of Washington Student Leadership will have the opportunity to increase their understanding and/or effectiveness in the following processes:

A. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Students will have the opportunity to:

1. Improve speaking skills in small or large groups.
2. Improve listening skills in small or large groups.
3. Improve group skills necessary to get others to listen.
4. Increase poise while working in groups.
5. Increase awareness of the importance of public relations.

B. GROUP PROCESSES

Students will have the opportunity to:

1. Increase their awareness and effectiveness in group processes and skills as they apply to various situations.
2. Increase their understanding of different leadership styles as they apply to various situations.
3. Increase their understanding of the concepts of conflict resolution.
4. Increase their ability to apply effective motivation and involvement techniques.
5. Increase their understanding of appropriate group decision-making processes.
6. Increase their understanding of effective goal setting.
7. Increase their understanding of the importance of identifying and utilizing available resources.
8. Increase their understanding of the concepts of group dynamics.
9. Increase their understanding of appropriate evaluation and/or debriefing techniques.

C. MANAGERIAL SKILLS

Students will have the opportunity to gain an understanding of:

1. The essential elements necessary in planning, conducting and evaluating meetings, skits, assemblies, fund-raisers, and other projects.
2. Various problem-solving techniques.
3. The value of delegation of authority, involvement techniques, and methods of motivation.
4. The principle of chain of command.
5. Time management, task analysis, and pre and post time lining.
6. Respect for established procedures, legal parameters, and financial and budgetary management.
7. Various goal setting and prioritization techniques.
8. Position functions.

D. SELF-AWARENESS

Students will have the opportunity to:

1. Increase their self-esteem and self-concept through an increased understanding and awareness of self.
2. Increase their understanding of self through self-inventory, values clarification, goal setting and evaluating experiences.
3. Increase their skills in areas of assertiveness, risk-taking, conflict resolution, and time management.
4. Increase their self-help skills in areas of stress management, coping with failure/success, and dealing with criticism/praise.

E. HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS

Students have the opportunity to:

1. Increase their understanding of the values of positive reinforcement, trust, and honest communication.
2. Increase their awareness of social, cultural, ethnic and racial diversity, and develop strategies to promote respect and acceptance of diversity.
3. Increase their understanding of techniques used to develop positive school and community climates.
4. Increase their understanding of the lonely/alienated students and ways to increase their sense of belonging.
5. Increasing their awareness of good sportsmanship and the ways it can be generated.
6. Increase their awareness of sexism and sexual equality in leadership.