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The introduction to this bibliography gives a definition of the middle school and indicates that in 1966 the number of such schools in the United States was 499. The compiler points out the disadvantages of the junior high in contrast to the advantages of the middle school. In addition, he includes a brief review of two books which support opposite sides of the controversy. The selected unannotated bibliography, compiled from "Education Index" and "Research in Education," contains citations for five books, 43 journal articles, and three reports. (JS)

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THE MIDDLE SCHOOL: A SELECTED  
BIBLIOGRAPHY WITH INTRODUCTION

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## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL: A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY WITH INTRODUCTION

Myron Jacobson, at the 1966 Junior High School Conference held at New York University asked the very important question: "Are we attending not one, but two meetings today--the last Junior High Conference, and the first Middle School Conference?" (Educational Leadership, 23: 217-223, March, 1965).

This is not to be considered a facetious question, but one that must be answered in current educational circles. William Cuff (Education Digest, 32: 23-5, April, 1967), in a recent survey encompassing 44 states, presents a very elucidating picture of the status of middle schools. He reports the following facts for 1965-66 in his study. There were 446 public school districts in 29 states operating 499 middle schools. The greatest percentage (97%) of them were located in 16 states, Ohio, Maine, New Jersey, and Illinois, with just over 50 middle schools apiece, and Texas, with over 100, comprised about two-thirds of the total. Most middle schools were in small school districts, 94% of the communities cited had but one, usually the sole building in the system housing the stipulated grades. Eight large cities were included in the survey and accounted for only 27 middle schools.

The number of middle schools is constantly increasing, accompanied by a decrease in the number of junior high schools. Several cities, Boston, Pittsburgh, Chicago have publicized their intention of incorporating middle schools throughout their school systems. The New York City Board of Education is planning to exchange all of its 138 junior high schools for a middle school network by 1972.

This writer examined the Illinois Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction school directory for 1961 and 1968 to ascertain the number of middle and junior high schools in operation in Illinois (not including Chicago). A decided trend toward grade-level grouping usually associated with middle schools is presented in the accompanying table.

A few years ago the then new junior high school seemed to be the accepted school organization best suited for pupils in the post-childhood and pre-adolescence period. In recent years there has been considerable controversy arising from the development of a new concept in American education. The increase in the numbers of middle schools emerging throughout the country has caused educators to look at this new phenomenon on the American Scene.

### What is the Middle School?

What do we mean by the middle school? In some areas of the country, the term is strange even to many educators. This confusion is caused by a lack of a common definition. Terms such as intermediate grades, upper grades centers, junior high schools, and departmentalized intermediate give some indication of the range of terminology with which "middle school" identification is facing.

Tracey (Catholic School Journal, 68: 56-8, April, 1968.) uses a definition that appears to fit the various interpretations. He states "The middle school is a school between elementary and high school, housed separately and ideally, in a building freshly designed for its purpose, and covering at least three of the middle school years beginning with grades 5 or 6." "Whether a school is a

MIDDLE AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN OPERATION IN ILLINOIS  
(NOT INCLUDING CHICAGO) IN 1961-62 AND 1967-68

School Year

<u>Organizational Structure</u>	<u>1961 - 62</u>		<u>1967 - 68</u>	
	<u>No. of Schools</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>No. of Schools</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
7 - 9	76	20.7	81	18.5
7 - 8	256	69.7	216	49.4
6 - 8	27	7.3	98	22.4
5 - 8	7	1.9	31	7.0
6 - 9			1	.2
5 - 7			1	.2
4 - 8			5	1.0
7			1	.2
8			1	.2
9	<u>1</u>	<u>.2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>.4</u>
6	367	99.6	437	99.5

These figures represent individual schools not districts

junior high or middle school is determined by examining the purposes of education and judging which of these grade arrangements (5-8 or 6-8 vs. 7-9) might facilitate most efficaciously the achievement of these purposes.

One must criticize on the alleged weaknesses in junior high schools such as: rigid departmentalization (exemplified by the standards in grade nine established by the Carnegie unit), extra-curricular activities such as marching bands, athletics, sophisticated social events, and elaborate graduation ceremonies. Opponents would classify these as superficial and simply dismiss them. Several writers maintain that the reasons given for the junior high school (such as preventing dropouts, easing transition, etc.) no longer exist.

Some writers suggest that the term "junior" is very unsatisfactory, since it applies no identity for the junior high school.

### Some Advantages of Middle School

In the process of reviewing the publications the following seemed to represent a concensus of advantages of the middle school.

1. It provides an identity for the pupil grade leveling groupings it includes, rather than a "junior" classification.
2. It facilitates the introduction of specialization and team teaching staff utilization in grades 5 and 6.
3. It allows for a reorganization of teacher education in order to provide teachers competent for the middle school.
4. Developmentally, children in grades 6-8 are probably more alike than children in grades 7-9.
5. It provides an opportunity for planned gradual change from the self-contained classroom to complete departmentalization.
6. It helps to extend the guidance services into the elementary schools.

### Reviews of Two Books

Samuel H. Popper in his recent book, The American Middle School: An Organizational Analysis, states that he believes that the middle school is "neither an elementary school nor a high school" but rather is "a functionally differentiated unit" of the total school organization. Approximately the first half of this book is used in presenting background information on the junior high movement, from its European origin to present time. Chapter II, entitled "Dysfunction and Instability" describes the ills that have befallen the junior high school movement and objectively the problems that will continue to assail both the middle and junior high school. The last portion of the book presents constructive suggestions for improving middle schools. The book is well written and, although a defense of the junior high school, it gives the reader a great deal of insight into that movement, the ills that befall it, and the discrepancies that occur between goals and practice.

M. Ann Grooms, in her book entitled, Perspectives on the Middle School, describes in great detail the characteristics of the middle school--as contrasted with the junior high school. The middle school serves the age group 10-14 in a program that emphasizes a nongraded structure, student teams for learning, teams that overlap grade and subject lines, and more independent-study programs. There is a great emphasis placed on preparing both student and parent for this new kind of schools and the author is very specific as to how this can be done.

The author spends a good deal of time establishing the need for a unique training for middle school staff. This training differs greatly from that of junior high staff members. She emphasizes the internship and specially planned in-service education program as a substitute for a discrete university program. The middle school curricula is defined on page 74 as "learning programs at a given point in time." The emphasis is on inquiry rather than memorization. The flexible schedule and special interest subject matter, social science, science, mathematic, unified arts, language arts, and health-phy-ed are proposed to meet the individual needs of the pupils.

The Fox Lane Middle School, Mt. Kesco, New York is presented as an example of approved practice; particularly the basic features of a new kind of school plant. The final chapter, "Middle Schools of the Future," projects three middle schools in the 70's and whets the readers' appetites.

### Selected Bibliography

The writer examined Education Index beginning with 1960 in an attempt to ascertain the frequency of publications available in the category of "Middle Schools" and/or "Junior High." Any publication that included these terms in its title was then reviewed by the writer. The same procedure was used in reviewing materials cited in ERIC publications (Research in Education) from July, 1967. Of the articles (and other materials) reviewed, the ones included in the bibliography which follows were, in the writer's judgement, among the more relevant and informative. The bibliography is, therefore, selected rather than exhaustive.

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