

# Nominees for Positions on the NMLSTA Board of Directors

## President-Elect

### **Elizabeth “Liz” Martinez**

Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, Aurora, Illinois  
Lead curriculum and professional development specialist IMSA SEI Program

#### **Qualifications**

For over 30 years, I’ve been involved with middle school science education as a classroom teacher, professional development specialist, curriculum developer, and manager. Recent projects include developing, managing, and delivering NGSS lessons for the Illinois State Board of Education, as well as the Illinois Math and Science Partnership.

#### **Educational philosophy and key goals to pursue as a member of the NMLSTA Board of Directors**

I am fortunate to have the opportunities to dedicate my entire career to middle school students and teachers. Whether a middle school student decides to pursue a STEM career or another avenue, s/he must be literate in science to be a functioning member of society. This unique group of students needs to be afforded engagement in science education that is relevant and applicable to their lives, especially in our global society.

To achieve the above goals, middle school teachers must be supported and have a voice at the national level. Development of educators as they shift from traditional prescriptive curricula to innovative experiences, develop better thinkers and problem solvers, as well as implement creative pedagogy are musts for middle school educators. NMLSTA is the advocate to assist on this continuous journey.

As President Elect I will support the vision and mission of NMLSTA by encouraging outreach activities to engage middle school educators and supporting their efforts of making content relevant for their students.

## Secretary

### **Kathy Biernat**

St. Mary’s Visitation School, Elm Grove, Wisconsin  
Teacher, Science (grades 5-8)

#### **Qualifications**

I have served for 18 months as Secretary for NMLSTA. I strive to prepare and submit accurate and detailed minutes of our meetings in a timely fashion as well as filing the minutes into our shared Google Drive. I have represented NMLSTA at regional and national meetings as a presenter.

#### **Educational philosophy and key goals to pursue as a member of the NMLSTA Board of Directors**

Yeats wrote, “Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire”. This sums up my educational philosophy because it highlights the importance of getting children enthusiastic about learning. The best teachers are those who truly enjoy learning themselves and transmit that through high levels of energy, engaging lesson plans and excitement about the subjects they

teach. Furthermore, teachers must give students a chance to BE Scientists as they learn problem-solving skills, practice teamwork skills, and think outside the box. Teachers should be facilitators and help students make meaning out of their world and better understand nature, their bodies, and the universe. A balance must be achieved in the classroom between engaging hands to create and engineer and minds to hypothesize, analyze and conclude.

### **Key Goals for NMLSTA**

We need to make this organization the go-to place for middle school science teachers to receive support, professional development and fellowship. Adding resources to the webpage, providing small grants to teachers and giving teachers a place to share is my primary goal for the upcoming election term.

## **Member of Board of Directors**

### **Barbara A. Dunham**

Bessemer City Middle School, Bessemer, Alabama  
Career Technologies/STEM Instructor

### **Qualifications**

Barbara Dunham has held several administrative positions with professional organizations. She continuously organizes and plans professional development activities for educators. She is honest and tolerant of differing views. Builds professional learning communities by creating an atmosphere of trust and integrity. If selected she will work to increase membership with the National Middle Level Science Teachers Association.

### **Educational philosophy and key goals to pursue as a member of the NMLSTA Board of Directors**

Today organizational leadership is an increasingly challenging process. Organizational leaders have numerous roles from implementing changes within the organization and ensuring success. Successful organizations provide a broad range of subject matter. As an organizational leader I will promote fidelity and ethical decision making that will result in improved achievement for the organization. I plan to engage in continuous improvement that demonstrates the values and goals of the organization. My professional goals are to become an effective leader with National Middle Level Science Teachers Association that builds a collaborative community of professionals that reflect excellence within two years.

### **Bryan Moretz**

Lake Mary Preparatory School, Lake Mary, Florida  
Middle School Science Teacher, Science Department Head, MakerSpace Lead Teacher

### **Qualifications**

The NMLSTA provides teachers with an opportunity to collaborate and expand the profession of science education across the country. I believe that I have strong leadership skills as a Science Department Head and MakerSpace Lead Teacher. Science and education are my passion and promoting science education through this position will be expand those horizons.

### **Educational philosophy and key goals to pursue as a member of the NMLSTA Board of Directors**

My educational philosophy is based off two aspects that go hand in hand... science and students. Through science, educators can open the minds of children looking for answers. It allows

students to explore the world around them and come to learn that nature is amazing. Science educators can change how students perceive things and mold students into curious individuals. Taking advantage of the tools around us in the laboratory or outside, science educators help students reach new ideas and develop new technologies to help those around them.

Using my education philosophy as a backbone, one of my goals as a Board of Directors member is to continue increasing awareness of the need for science educators and their impact on future generations. I want to train teachers how to use the tools available to make the curriculum more exciting and valuable. Another goal is to encourage collaboration between educators and those in other areas of expertise. This teamwork will help students see the value in their education and open new avenues for entrepreneurs and post-secondary education.

### **Edralin Pagarigan**

Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland  
Science Teacher, Science Department Chair

#### **Qualifications**

I am an experienced middle school science educator and teacher leader in America's public school system, a strong supporter towards advancing STEM education across the nation and have had a long career in educating and training teachers to improve teaching practices and students' educational attainment.

#### **Educational philosophy and key goals to pursue as a member of the NMLSTA Board of Directors**

"To be a leader is to be able to develop future leaders", this describes a philosophy that I hold as a teacher leader. My career path leads towards the advancement of science education in the national and global levels through active participation in developing effective science instruction.

As a science teacher, I aim to foster students' interest while learning science by being passionate to mold students as risk takers in problem solving while experiencing failures. Developing students' understanding of the nature of science and science processes is my next goal as a science teacher. Lastly, as technology plays a significant role in students' learning in the modern age, my goal is to maximize technology resources that facilitate learning process and assessment of learning.

To keep our students to be globally competitive, it is imperative to advance our students in our classrooms toward the STEM pipeline. Thus, this leadership, a role that I have consistently worked on throughout my teaching career, my goal is to help cultivate students' zeal in science.

### **Anne Schoeffler**

Seton Catholic School  
Science Teacher (grades 6-8), Hudson, Ohio

#### **Qualifications**

My leadership experience begins with fifteen years' experience as a middle school science teacher, extends to leadership positions at the district level in Girl Scouting, and begins with serving as a preschool board president. Currently I serve on my school's Principal's Advisory Committee and recently on the Accreditation Steering Committee.

#### **Educational philosophy and key goals to pursue as a member of the NMLSTA Board of Directors**

My primary goal as an educator is to help students learn to think. My classroom is an active one where students are immersed in science as problem-solving. I use a textbook for literacy skills; I've established school gardens for outdoor education experiences; my students engage in inquiry and data-collecting investigations; and they are responsible for expository writing. Long ago I established a set of target skills for students, giving them a means of self-evaluation and me a means of both documenting their accomplishments and communicating with parents. These allow me to design investigations with specific Nature of Science goals and students to develop metacognitive abilities.

I would like to see the NMLSTA increase outreach to communicate with members and share resources, especially for inquiry and PBL. I would like to survey teachers and then compile their grade-level-specific target skills lists; I would also like to explore how others encourage student metacognition and self-assessment. It is the inquisitive and insightful mindset that will make today's students the responsible citizens and voters of tomorrow.

### **Kristin Slota**

William Penn Middle School, Yardley, Pennsylvania  
7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science Teacher, Science Department Chairperson

#### **Qualifications**

As department chairperson I serve as a liaison between my department and administration. I mentor teachers in our district as a demonstration teacher. I have written grants to enrich the learning of students. I participate in professional development opportunities, so I can share what I learn with others.

#### **Educational philosophy and key goals to pursue as a member of the NMLSTA Board of Directors**

Students learn best when they feel comfortable in the classroom and with the people in the classroom. I try to use more proactive classroom management strategies instead of reactive strategies. I strive to create a community of learners in my classroom in which each individual is given respect, so they can reach their greatest potential.

I believe it is important to vary the method used to deliver the curriculum. I try to make the student experience in my classroom different each day. The variety helps the students to stay engaged in the learning process and also addresses different learning styles.

When assessing a student's understanding or skills, I assess at several different times and use a variety of techniques. I make a conscious effort to implement embedded formative assessment frequently so that I can provide the best possible instruction for all my students on a daily basis.

My main goal to pursue as a member of the NMLSTA Board of Directors is to collaborate and share with other educators to improve middle level science education across the nation.

### **Elizabeth Weissman**

Ramaz Middle School, New York, NY  
Science Department Coordinator, Science Teacher, Grades 6,7, and 8

#### **Qualifications**

I am very suitable to serve on the NMLSTA Board of Directors, as a result of my experience as a committed science educator and department coordinator. I have been actively involved in the development and advancement of middle level science education through practice, professional presentations, and conference participation.

## **Educational philosophy and key goals to pursue as a member of the NMLSTA Board of Directors**

As a dedicated science teacher, and current middle school science department coordinator, I am qualified to serve on your Board of Directors. I feel very strongly about the promotion and development of science education at the middle level, as it provides the bedrock of a student's science learning. I am especially interested in the promotion of science education for girls and urban science education. I have been supporting this interest by attending and presenting at multiple area and national conferences. This includes a presentation at the Meet Me in the Middle Day at last year's NSTA conference in Los Angeles. I will also be presenting this year in Atlanta at the MMITM Day, as well as, an additional session on STEAM. At the conference last year, I sat in on the NLMSTA meeting, and as a result, volunteered to be on the membership committee, and am ready to dedicate my time and energy to serving in different additional aspects of NLMSTA.