



TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

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The mission of the public education system in Texas is to ensure that all children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the opportunities of our state and nation. Texas school districts are expected to develop strategies to improve student performance and to provide middle school students, their teachers and counselors, and their parents with information that will help them make informed curriculum choices.

Student success in the middle grades has never been more important in Texas than it is right now. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders have an interest in improving the success of our middle grade students.

Success in the Middle: A Policymaker's Guide to Achieving Quality Middle Level Education provides decision makers at all levels a focused, comprehensive set of goals and recommendations critical to implementing successful middle level schools. This guide provides practical recommendations that reflect the research, practices, and resources needed at the middle level if high-performing middle level schools are to become the norm.

I commend *Success in the Middle: A Policymaker's Guide to Achieving Quality Middle Level Education* and note that its goals and recommendations are worthy of your thoughtful review and consideration as policies are developed. Clearly, the time has come to recognize middle level education as a crucial link in the P-16 continuum. The lack of such recognition jeopardizes our efforts to improve our schools. The National Middle School Association should be commended for providing policymakers and all interested parties with this important new resource. Only by working together can our mission to provide all students with a quality education that develops knowledge, skills, and talents to their fullest extent be achieved.

Sincerely,

Shirley J. Neeley, Ed. D.
Commissioner of Education