

Association for Middle Level Education, American Student Assistance Announce Winners of Funding Contest for Educators to Kickstart Middle Grades Career Exploration Programming

COLUMBUS, Ohio, Feb. 17, 2022 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- The Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) and American Student Assistance (ASA) have announced three winning schools of their inaugural Playbook Challenge, a funding contest aimed at empowering middle grades educators with the resources they need to initiate meaningful career exploration with their students. The recipient schools are:

Custer Baker Intermediate School

Franklin, IN

The grade 5-6 school will adopt a career curriculum they've titled, "The Career Game," during which students will take a career interest assessment and engage in hands-on and virtual opportunities to explore various career and work environments. The experience will culminate in a trip to Biz Town, a Junior Achievement initiative that lets students be "adults for a day" while role playing in the occupations that they have identified as being of most interest to them.

Leavelle McCampbell Middle School

Graniteville, SC

This grade 6-8 school will create a school-based industry that replicates a real business, linking classroom learning and the "real world." All students in the school will have the opportunity to engage in a variety of skill-building tasks, including participation in leadership classes that will explore the fields of marketing, sales, purchasing, design, production, management, inventory, banking and finance, and customer service.

DreamHouse 'Ewa Beach Public Charter School

Kapolei, HI

The grade 6-8 school will collaborate with the National Park Service to introduce students to the diverse field of public history and allow them to explore professions related to education, conservation, and visitor services. The program aims to help students understand the power of storytelling and the strength it has for a collective pursuit for change.

The three schools will each receive a \$5,000 prize to bring their career exploration program to life during the 2022-2023 school year. The contest follows the launch of AMLE and ASA's joint publication, [Career Exploration in the Middle Grades: A Playbook for Educators](#). The first of its kind specifically for middle schools, the *Playbook* and its accompanying online resource center outline evidence-based best practices for successfully implementing career exploration with students aged 10-15. The *Playbook* provides a beginning framework for a variety of career exploration programs, complete with implementation guides and case studies from schools around the United States.

"We are delighted to champion these three schools and are excited to see their programs grow and positively impact these students and their futures," said Stephanie Simpson, CEO of AMLE, "It was a competitive selection, and we are grateful to all of the schools that applied for thinking creatively about how they can provide meaningful career exploration opportunities to their middle grades students."

Evidence shows that introducing middle school students to exploration and experiences can play a huge factor in showing them their options and guiding them to pursue what's best for them. In fact, 87% of middle schoolers are interested in ways to match their skills and interests with potential careers, according to ASA's ["Efficacy and Innovation in Middle School Career Exploration: Proven Models for Student Success"](#) white paper.

"We congratulate all of the talented and dedicated educators and their respective schools on their outstanding achievement in this pioneering career exploration challenge," said ASA CEO and President Jean Eddy. "ASA is proud to support teachers with the professional development resources they need, as part of their important work to change the way our young people learn about careers, explore their passions, and try new career-related experiences as early as middle school."

The winning schools will present their programs live at the [#AMLE22: The 49th Annual Conference for Middle Level Education](#) this November in Orlando, Florida.

About the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE)

The Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) is an international membership organization that helps middle grades educators reach every student, grow professionally, and create great schools. To learn more, visit www.amle.org.

About American Student Assistance® (ASA)

American Student Assistance® (ASA) is a national nonprofit committed to helping students know themselves, know their options, and make informed decisions to achieve their education and career goals. ASA believes all students should have equitable access to career readiness learning, starting in middle school, so they can develop a plan for their future. ASA fulfills its mission by providing digital-first resources directly to students and support for educators and intermediaries. To learn more about ASA, visit www.asa.org/about-us.

SOURCE American Student Assistance (ASA)

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