

## A Message From The President

This past year has really caused many to reexamine their priorities and commitments. Professional organizations like the Iowa Association for Middle Level Educators have had to reevaluate their bottom line. The IAMLE Board has felt like we have operated on a budget that provides a mission of critical activities and programs that benefit membership without any excess or fluff. However, we will continue to evaluate every part of our budget in terms of what matters most to the members of our organization. Membership in the Iowa Association for Middle Level Education continues to provide the best investment in professional growth.

Our major financial commitments fall within three categories: publications and public relations, staff and program development, and board operating expenses. Publications consist mainly of a quarterly newsletter called the Update, bulk mailed to our 1800 members, professional organizations, and corporate sponsors. It is the single most important point of contact we have with membership throughout the year. It is also archived on our website. In addition to the Update, our website ([www.iamle.org](http://www.iamle.org)) contains numerous resources for our membership that would not otherwise be economical or convenient for membership to make available through mailings. R. Paul Brimm Teacher of the Year, IAMLE Mini-Grants, web resources, registration information for the Midwest Regional and Iowa sectional conferences are all linked to our site. These two resources are valued by membership.

The second category of financial commitments is staff and program development. Staff development includes district consultations, sectional conferences, Summer Camp, and the Midwest regional. Attendance at the Omaha Midwest regional far exceeded our budgeted expectations. Attendance at our sectionals continues to be phenomenal. Our Summer Camp will be full again for the second consecutive year. Program development through our minigrant awards has reached \$3000.00 and we continue to award and fully

fund our R. Paul Brimm teacher of the year. Our mission to "... promote educational improvement for middle level students" could not be fulfilled without these core staff and program development initiatives. These developmental activities that show the methods of advancing best practices which membership continues to support.

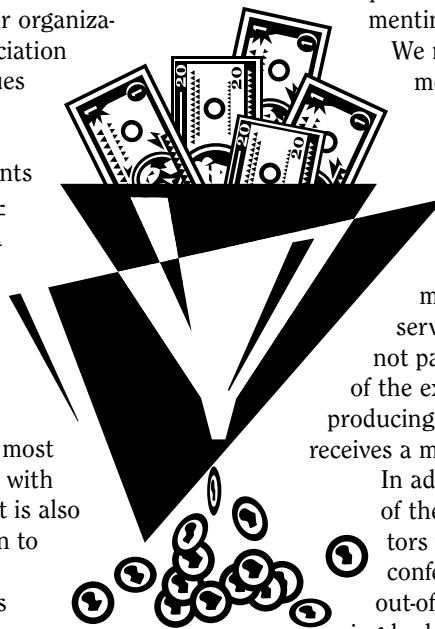
Finally, the IAMLE Board has operating expenses focused on planning and implementing the mission of the Organization.

We meet five times per year in the most central area of the state. We have rotated our schedule to include two Saturday meetings during the school year to reduce substitute reimbursement situations at the local district level. Elected board members donate their time to the service of our organization and are not paid for their contributions. Because of the extraordinary time involved in producing the Update, our newsletter editor receives a minimal stipend.

In addition, we cover those travel costs of the President and Executive Directors when they present at Sectional conferences in Iowa. There has been no out-of-state travel paid from our operating budget this year. This is similar to travel restrictions in place in many school districts across Iowa. We are fortunate to have Rick Herrig, Executive Director of IAMLE. He also represents the North Region of the United States as a Trustee to our National Affiliate (National Middle School Association) which enables him to attend the Affiliate Leadership Summit and other NMSA functions on behalf of NMSA, thus eliminating this travel expense from our budget.

We also conduct Board elections each spring, which necessitates the printing and mailing of election ballots to all members. While we are investigating ways to conduct this election over our website in a way that is secure and legitimate, regular mailing still exists as the best method to conduct fair elections to date.

We are interested in looking at ways to diversify



Executive Director,  
Rick Herrig  
President,  
Jeff Schumacher  
President-Elect,  
to be determined  
Past President,  
vacant  
Treasurer,  
Brad Buck  
Secretary,  
Steve Triplett  
Membership,  
Betty Smith  
Newsletter Editor,  
Wendy Parker  
Directors-At-Large,  
Megan Balong  
Marc McCoy  
Directors:  
Central Regional,  
Mary Decker  
Northwest Region,  
Pauline Zabka  
Southeast Region,  
Tim Wernentin  
Southwest Region,  
Bev Maronn  
Northeast Region,  
Sharon Hauser

### Highlights of this issue:

Election Results ..... page 4  
R. Paul Brimm Award Application ..... page 3

### Features:

Changes in MS Gifted Students ..... page 5  
Sectional Updates ..... page 6

### Next Issue of UPDATE...

Summer Camp 2002 Highlights  
October Conference in Sioux Falls Information  
Idea Corner: Budget Saving Ideas

continues

## Central Sectional Update

Over 80 people attended the Central Sectional Conference hosted by Goodrell Middle School in Des Moines. Jack Berckemeyer from NMSA gave a fabulous keynote that was both humorous and informative. Following the keynote several breakout sessions on a variety of interesting and timely issues for middle level educators were held.

---

### A Message From The President *continued*

our income streams as well. Four corporate sponsors have shown leadership and foresight in supporting our statewide initiatives. We are pursuing capital from various grant sources to help districts and individuals offset their costs of engaging in our staff development opportunities. It is not enough to tighten our expenses. We need to think outside the traditional bounds of income sources to grow as a service organization, and we are!

You are to be congratulated for maintaining your current IAMLE membership. Members that have participated in one or more IAMLE sponsored events know that the value of membership is obvious. Unlike the new slogan for the US Army, we are not "The Power of One." In middle level education, our success comes from "The Power of Our Sum." Not as catchy a phrase perhaps, but nothing could be closer to the truth.

As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, know that those of us who have been in education long enough understand that we have been through difficult times before. As long as we continue to make prudent financial decisions and keep our focus on what is truly important, we will maintain our presence as the leading voice in middle level education.

Best wishes to you on your remaining quarter of the year. We are looking forward to seeing all of you who will be attending this year's Summer Camp at Simpson College in Indianola June 24-27. Keep an eye on the website, [www.iamle.org](http://www.iamle.org), for an entire list of activities that remain this year and a new list of dates and activities for the 2002-2003 school year!

## Northwest Iowa Sectional Conference

Wednesday, April 10 found middle school educators meeting together at the Spirit Lake Middle School for the Northwest Iowa Sectional Conference. The attendees began the evening with enjoying dinner, touring the middle school facility, and visiting displays. Following this, Rick Herrig, our keynote speaker, treated us to an excellent presentation. His topic, "It's a Pool Party and You're All Invited," compared having a pool party to the implementation of all the components of a middle school concept. His "visual aids" were especially helpful in showing what it takes to make our middle school pool party a success. With Rick's inspirational words in our minds and many door prizes in hand, we headed to our breakout sessions. There were twelve sessions on a variety of topics from which to choose. Subject area chat sessions

concluded the evening.

A big thank you to our host, Spirit Lake Middle School and all others who had a part in making this sectional conference a success. Schools providing presentations were Estherville, North Kossuth, Okoboji, and Pocahontas Middle Schools. Other presenters were Rick Herrig, Buena Vista University, ISU Extension Service, Lakeland AEA 3, and Lifetouch. Perfection Learning and Iowa Lakes Community College Talent Search provided displays. We were pleased to have three of IAMLE's corporate sponsors HyVee, Lifetouch, and Perfection Learning represented by attendance, presentations, displays, and donations of door prizes. Buena Vista University, Lakeland AEA 3, and ILCC Talent Search also donated door prizes.

"It's a Pool Party and You're All Invited,"



*The United States was hit one day,  
It blew all of our confidence away.  
We were stunned at the thought that we weren't strong,  
But it made us bond.*

*We started asking questions, Who", "What", "Where" and "Why",  
As we said to the Towers "Farewell" ad "Goodbye".  
Then we started to look through the rubble,  
But that just brought to our hearts sorrow and trouble.*

*Then into our hearts came hostility and hate,  
For we knew who destroyed part of New York State.  
To Afghanistan we went, to search him out,  
To take him down for the full count.*

*Seven Months have gone by,  
We're still asking Who", "What", "Where" and "Why",  
President Bush and the soldiers are doing all they can,  
As for the people - "United We Stand"!*

Michael Boal, 6th Grade  
Mrs. Martinson, Language Arts Teacher  
Parkview Middle School  
Ankeny Community School District



## The Iowa Association for Middle Level Education – IAMLE is Accepting Nominations for the R. Paul Brimm Award

Each year the Iowa Association for Middle Level Education sponsors the R. Paul Brimm Award. The purpose of the R. Paul Brimm Award is to recognize an outstanding middle level educator from the state of Iowa. The criteria for the R. Paul Brimm award recipient will center around middle level educators who are committed to:

- \* lifelong learning
- \* middle level education
- \* the philosophy of middle level education

All nominations for the **R. Paul Brimm Award** are due **May 30** of the school year in which the nomination is being made.

All nominees will be informed of the committee's decision by September 1, of the school year in which the nomination is being made. The award will be presented at the Midwest Regional Middle Level Educator's Conference October.

TO NOMINATE someone for this prestigious award:

- Fill out the form below and click "send", or
- Print the form from your computer, fill out, and send to

**Jeff Schumacher**

Assistant Principal  
Parkview Middle School  
105 NW Pleasant St  
Ankeny, IA 50021  
Phone: (515) 965-9640  
Fax: (515) 965-9648  
e-mail: jshoe@ankeny.k12.ia.us



Additional brief information will be sent to you and the candidate via US mail to finish the process.

---

## R. Paul Brimm Award Nomination Form

**Due May 30, 2002**

Sponsored by IAMLE

***I hereby nominate:***

Nominee's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's School \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Position \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Address \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Email Address \_\_\_\_\_



## Building the Plane in the Air

by Rick Herrig, Executive Director

Picture yourself at an airport ready to board your plane for departure and the announcement comes across the PA that you will be flying today with three of the four engines functioning. Reassuring? I think not, yet everyday we pilot our middle schools with less than all engines operating.

If our middle schools were planes, would we choose to fly them before they were assembled? Would you bother to fly a plane if the flight attendant gave you a wing, or an engine, or seats and asked you to attach them after the plane left the ground? The wing, engine, and other parts of the middle school "plane" are the essential components recommended by *Turning Points 2000* and proponents of effective middle schools. Too often the incremental implementation of the middle level concept causes us to "take off" before our plane is safe to fly. We get our middle schools "off the ground" with teaming structure or a change in grade configuration or maybe even common planning time and then we try to continue building the plane when it's in the air. Worse yet, we choose bits and pieces of the middle school concept that we think works best for us and only implement those changes...and then we expect our plane to fly as high or as fast as other schools who understand the necessity of building a plane with all

components intact. A well-constructed plane, complete with high quality materials and powerful engines will fly faster, higher, and with greater efficiency than others who would cut corners. It will reach its destination with greater frequency and with greater customer satisfaction than others. A middle school that gives attention to implementing all components necessary to create a high functioning middle school will reach their destination, high academic achievement in a nurturing environment, with like frequency and satisfaction.

What does your plane look like? Are you missing the fuselage, a wing, and/or the engines? How much attention have you given to curriculum integration, interdisciplinary instruction, or simple curriculum mapping? Do you have an advisory period? Do you engage in common planning time at least 30 minutes four times per week? Do you have an active parent/community/business component functioning in your building? Is teaming present at each grade level? Do you have an exploratory curriculum? Do students have multiple opportunities for social interactions in their classes and within activities you offer? Do you use flexible block scheduling to deliver your curriculum? What parts are missing from your plane? Is it safe to fly?



### IAMLE Members...

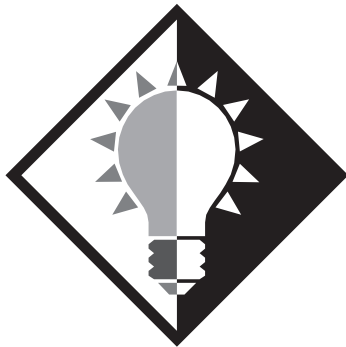
Have you seen the member services area on our Web site? Check it out soon. The log in information is case sensitive.

The User ID is: teach  
The password is: MLevel

### Surf the web at [www.iamle.org](http://www.iamle.org).

Check out our services: outstanding teacher links by content area, detailed information about our Regional 2000 conference in Des Moines, access to our publications. All of this AND MORE are just a mouse click away. Place us on your "list of favorites". Coming soon, you will be able to access the Journal, in real time, on the web.

## The Idea Corner



### School-to-Work Activities

- Students job shadow a person for all or part of a day
- Research paper on an occupation
- Career Day where persons from many different careers come in and talk to students in small groups
- Student-led conferences that allow a student to summarize his/her accomplishments, weak areas, goals and progress
- Occupational surveys
- Careers class as an exploratory
- Field trips to local businesses

### IAMLE Board Goals

The Board of Directors of the Iowa Association for Middle Level Education has organized work around three goals for the 1998-99 school year. These goals are focused on serving the needs and expectations of the membership, designed to reinforce quality programming for middle level students. First, the Board is looking at collaborating with Regents institutions to create summer workshops on middle level educational opportunities. In addition, the Board is investigating opportunities to provide support and assistance to school districts wishing to transition to middle level education and districts taking their middle level programs to higher levels. Second, the Board is preparing to survey membership as to individual needs. Third, the Board is actively supporting and promoting sectional conferences. They have committed to bring current information, service, and resources to members through an expanded website. Finally, the Board is developing a middle level educators conference covering a current hot topic to be offered over the ICN this winter.

# Changes In Middle School Gifted Students

by Cathy Zimmerman

## Forgetting

One of the earliest signs of the emerging gifted preadolescent is FORGETTING:

“I had homework, but I forgot to take my books home.”

“I know my parents signed my mid-term slip, but I forgot to put it in my binder.”

“Somebody called for my folks last night, but I don’t remember who it was.”

“How can I remember to take all this stuff home from school?”

“I forgot to write down the assignment in my agenda.”



At first we are understanding.... after all, we all forget sometimes. But as forgetting increases, we become frustrated and then annoyed. Why so much forgetting, especially from a child who, up until recently could have managed a large corporation single-handedly? And whose organizational skills could surpass any CEO?

Preadolescents’ gifted minds are so preoccupied with other issues, ones that are more real and meaningful to them that they truly do not remember. Adults with a lot on their minds misplace things, forget even necessary items (the car keys, the package left on the counter, the iron left on, the coffee pot left on) and have trouble focusing for more than a few minutes at a time. So too does the gifted middle schooler. The preadolescent gifted mind is filled with worries and concerns, big and small. Am I liked? Am I tall enough? Will I look okay? Why does my wrist hurt? Is grandpa sick? Why is the teacher looking at me? Will the rain forest totally be destroyed? Will the terrorists attack again? Will I get all A’s? Why does my sister get everything she wants? Why does everyone expect so much from me? Why isn’t it okay to be smart or a good thinker, or problem solver? Will my grade point go up or down? Why can’t I be just like everyone else? Should I let them use my homework? Should I cheat to get an A? Is my grandma going to die? Are we going to die? Will there be a World War III? Will I get to start on the team tonight? What if people laugh at me? Why can’t I fall asleep?

Because of the constant anxiety about self and the wider world that gifted middle schoolers are now experiencing daily,

remembering something like a pencil for class or to put the dinner casserole in the oven at 5:15 p.m. becomes almost impossible. This anxiety eases during the end of preadolescence, but is likely to drive us crazy in between and that is where middle school teachers and students live - in between!

We can help gifted kids who forget by first understanding that, for the most part, they do not forget on purpose. It is truly part of the age. Secondly, we can try some creative reminders instead of nagging. One mother I know put a wipe-off board by the back door her daughter used to leave for school. On the board were written daily reminders for things that must go to school: “library books,” “mid-terms,” “permission slips,” “money for lunch ticket,” and “money for year book.” This mom knows that she must rewrite everything every day. Old, recurring messages get tuned out. This was a great idea and a gentle reminder - no nagging.

ALL Berg Middle School students are required to carry their agendas or binders with them to every class, every day. They record their assignments, a summary of each class, and any other information that they need. They fill in circles or cross out the assignments when they are finished. The students may need to set a study time at home in order to complete assignments. They also should make a daily list (a weekly list is too much) with a few things on it to be done that day. They are reminded in home room when things such as mid-terms reports are due. They are given a few days

to get these tasks accomplished. If they do not get the paperwork back during the required time, a consequence is given. The consequence might be noon detention, a green card signature, after school detention, or other. Some parents sign the agendas as do some teachers to help students stay on track. The purpose is to teach students responsibility while understanding their forgetfulness. The gifted students some times think they do not need to use their agendas. Then they forget things. For example this past week, one of the gifted boys needed to return a book because another student wanted to use it. He forgot to bring it to school again. He had a choice - a note home from the teacher - or write it down in his agenda. He wrote it down in his agenda, but with his excellent memory he was sure he didn’t really need to. He finally admitted that if he had not written it down, he would not have remembered it. We also need to remind gifted students about due dates and materials needed for projects. They must be given the big picture and also have it broken down into manageable parts. We must teach them how to set realistic goals. They are now learning how to take on a tremendous assortment of life-tasks and changes. Gifted students still need some hand-holding (but not the firm, physical grip previously necessary) and support (you might be the only person that ever really listens to them - in fact I have had students tell me that no one has even talked to them all day - how sad) plus challenges that stretch and make them think out of the box as they get started on the road to being responsible adults.

The preadolescent gifted mind is filled with worries and concerns, big and small.





## Election Results

The following persons were appointed by the Executive Committee to fill these positions:

- Executive Director ..... Rick Herrig - Bettendorf MS
- Secretary ..... Steve Triplett - Farfield MS
- Treasurer ..... Brad Buck - Waukee MS
- Newsletter ..... Wendy Parker - Berg MS, Newton

Voting from IAMLE members selected the following positions:

- President-Elect ..... Marc McCoy - Linn Mar MS, Marion
- At-Large Directors ..... Megan Balong - Price Lab School, Cedar Falls  
Steve Kwikkel - Waverly-Shellrock MS
- Central Director ..... Mary Decker - Goodrell MS, Des Moines

**Iowa Association for Middle Level Education**

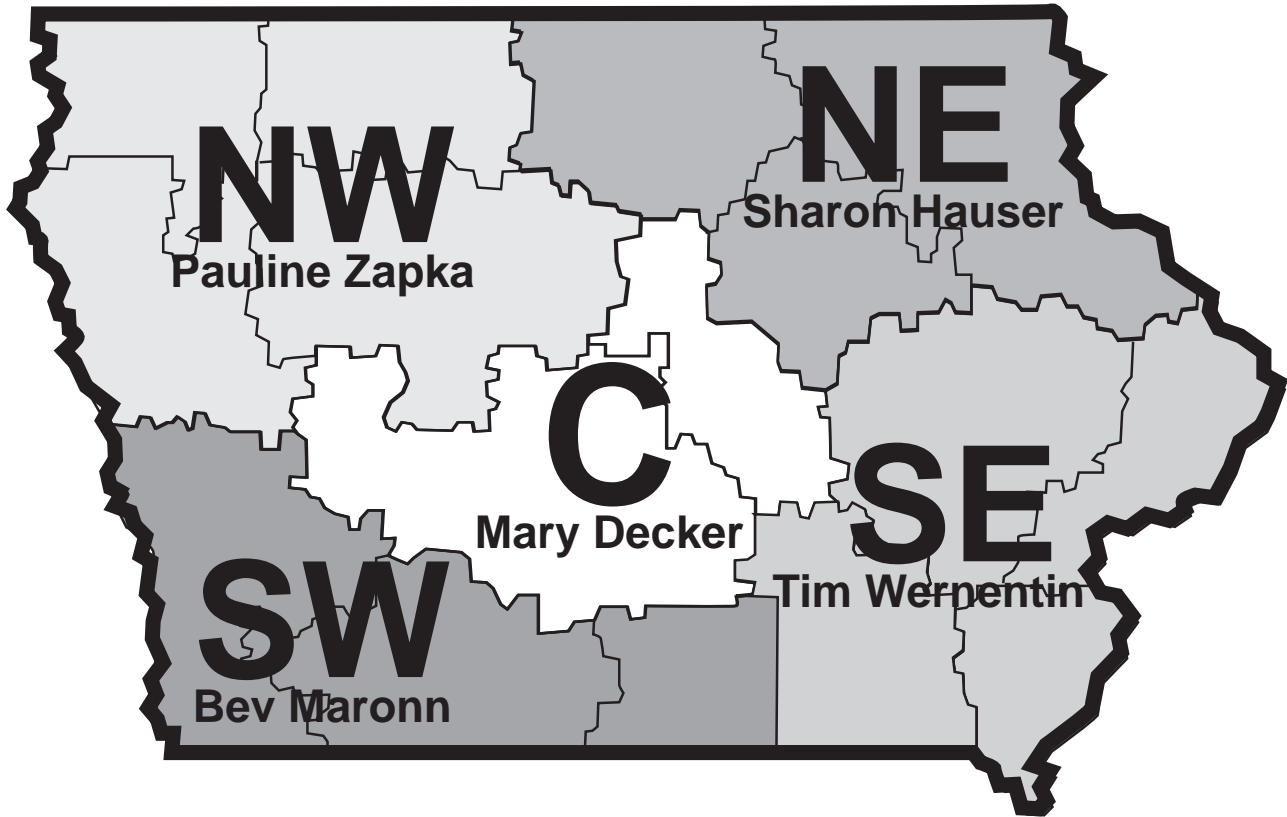
Northwest Section contains  
AEA's 3, 4, and 12

Northeast Section contains  
AEA's 1, 2, and 7

Central Section contains  
AEA's 5, 6, and 11

Southwest Section contains  
AEA's 13, 14, and part of 15

Southeast Section contains  
AEA's 9, 10, part of 15, and 16



At-Large Director  
Steve Kwikkel

At-Large Director  
Megan Balong

Executive Director  
Rick Herrig

President  
Jeff Schumacher

President-Elect  
Marc McCoy

Secretary  
Steve Triplett

Membership  
Betty Smith

Treasurer  
Brad Buck

Newsletter Editor  
Wendy Parker

Conference Chair  
Deb Rose

## Month of the Young Adolescent October 2002



### WAYS TO GET INVOLVED FOR SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

- Celebrate the Month of the Young Adolescent with a kick-off party
- Plan weekly activities for parents and students such as a carnival night, an open house, a math game night, a read aloud night or a crafts night
- Have local places of worship hold informational services concerning the importance of adolescents in the community
- Encourage local businesses to have an open house and share information concerning future career opportunities
- Suggest that local community organizations offer open recreation times
- Ask local medical facilities to offer free health screenings for young adolescents and their families
- Provide informational nights at the local school, highlighting the diverse needs of young adolescents
- Work with young adolescents to create a community garden
- Organize a mentor program for young adolescents in your community
- Visit, tour or volunteer at your local middle school
- Learn to celebrate all of the good things that young adolescents can bring to your community
- Urge your community to proclaim October as Month of the Young Adolescent

**For additional information on the Month of the Young Adolescent, call 1-800-528-NMSA or go to [www.nmsa.org](http://www.nmsa.org)**

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
4151 Executive Parkway, Suite 300  
Westerville, OH 43081  
1-800-528-NMSA (6672)  
E-mail: [info@NMSA.org](mailto:info@NMSA.org)

© COPYRIGHT 2002 by NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.





**Corporate sponsors of IAMLE.**



The Iowa Association for Middle Level Education - the only affiliate of the National Middle School Association in Iowa - is dedicated to meeting the needs of young adolescents and committed to promoting educational improvement for middle level students.

The IAMLE UPDATE is the official newsletter of the Iowa Association for Middle Level Education and is published four times each academic year. Subscription to the IAMLE UPDATE is included in IAMLE membership dues.



MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION

IAMLE UPDATE  
Iowa Association for Middle Level Education  
909 mNE 15th Street  
Ankeny, IA 50021

PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Newton, IA  
Permit No. 728

IAMLE UPDATE    Volume 12, Number 3

Editor: Wendy Parker  
Newton, Iowa  
parker.wendy@mail1.newton.k12.ia.us  
641/792-7741 Work  
641/787-0055 Home

IAMLE homepage [www.iamle.org](http://www.iamle.org)