

## **Muth Award FAQ**

*The following are some common questions about the Muth Award. If your question isn't addressed below, please contact Patricia Alderman at Middle Cities at [palderman@middlecities.org](mailto:palderman@middlecities.org) or (517) 347-0292.*

### **Can more than one school per district apply for the award?**

Yes – there is no limit on the number of schools within a district that may apply for the award. This year, we are also leaving the door open for the possibility that more than one school from a district could be selected as a winner.

### **Is there a limit on the length/number of pages of our application?**

The introductory statement about why the school deserves to win this year's award is limited to two, typewritten pages, but there is no limit on the length of the rest of your award entry. However, it's important to remember that quantity doesn't necessarily mean quality – applications are judged on content, not the number of pages.

### **How do most schools submit their applications once completed?**

How an entry is “packaged” is really up to the members of the writing team – there is not a specific requirement with regard to this issue. With that said, most schools choose to submit their completed entries in a three-ring binder. Others have used a variety of different types of folders or just stapled the pages together. Content is really more important than how the application is packaged.

### **Our school received a Muth Award in the past. Are we eligible to apply again?**

Past Muth award winners are eligible to apply as long as the school was not one of last year's winners. While there are no hard and fast rules with regard to the time a school must wait between awards, we generally use a five year window as a rule of thumb.

### **How should we format our submission?**

It's recommended that you structure your entry in the same order as outlined in the application. This makes it easier for writing teams to make sure all information requested is covered, and it also makes the readers' jobs easier when it comes to evaluating award applications.

### **We put a lot of work into our application and would like to have it returned for our records – is that possible?**

If you would like your application returned, you must include a note with your submission; otherwise, Middle Cities does not return awards. If the application is one of those chosen to receive a Muth Award this year, we will ask if it's ok for us to keep the application until the award ceremony in September after which time we will return it to you. Middle Cities reserves the right to copy all or portions of your award application for our own use before returning.

### **Any other tips/advice for writing teams?**

- Make sure your entry paints a clear picture of the school improvement efforts in your school. In all likelihood, the readers reviewing your application will have no prior knowledge of your building, so it's important to tell your school's story in a clear, concise manner and draw the connections between how data was used to drive decision making and results.
- Data is a critical piece of your application, especially when it comes to how data is used to drive decision making at your school. But simply including lists of data in your entry doesn't help readers draw the connection between decisions and results. Make sure you take the time to explain how your building used data to drive school improvement efforts.

Also, data that summarizes the performance of a certain grade of students or student subgroup is perfectly acceptable, but under no circumstances should individual student records be submitted as part of your entry for the Muth Award – doing so could be a violation of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- Don't hesitate to add creative touches to your entry. Inclusion of such items as brochures, pictures and other items can help make your entry more interesting. Just make sure your additional items support the picture of school improvement you're creating.