As of July 1, 2014, The South Carolina Middle School Association changed its name to South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education (SCAMLE). Linda Allen, Executive Director of SCAMLE, stated that the new name aligns with the national organization. The National Middle School Association is now Association for Middle Level Education. The name also more accurately represents the membership of SCAMLE. SCAMLE members include colleges and universities, K-8 schools, 6-12 schools, 7-8 schools as well as 6-8 schools.

In addition to the name change, the regions of SCAMLE were realigned to equalize the number of students in each region. The realignment map is included in the newsletter with a list of counties in each region. Members approved the name change and the realignment of regions at the business meeting at the annual conference March 2, 2014.

The South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education is committed to uniting the efforts of all those charged with responsibilities for meeting the unique needs of the middle level child through the definition, development, and dissemination of the best practices in middle level education. SCAMLE is the only state organization devoted solely to middle level education.

SCAMLE is looking forward to continuing the work of advancing middle level education with all its partners throughout the state and nation. Information about SCAMLE is on the new website, www.scamle.org. The new email address is linda.allen@scamle.org.

Allen Assumes Presidency of National Forum

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform welcomes Linda Allen as President. Mrs. Allen will serve as President for two years beginning with the National Forum Fall Meeting in Colorado in October, 2014. Mrs. Allen brings a wealth of middle grades expertise and leadership to the National Forum through her efforts in South Carolina over the past 30 years. Before retiring from the Rock Hill School District, she served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, director of middle and
F. Scott Fitzgerald composed such a sentence that has forever capsulized my feelings of autumn. The school year begins, and suddenly everything is transformed—a brand new year arrives despite the tropical year having four more months before its renewal. Changes come with fall much greater changes than just the leaves falling and the air gaining a chill. I am experiencing change as I type this letter. I am new to you, and you are new to me—so, I'd first and foremost like to extend my hand to say, “Hello!”

I am Sarah Metcalf, the new newsletter editor for the SCAMLE FOCUS. I’m currently studying to become a Middle Level Social Studies teacher, and hope to join you in the next few years in the field. I’m an Intern with the Office of School Transformation at SCDE, as well as a SC Teaching Fellow, avid crafter, baking enthusiast, occasional seamstress, and victim of a never-ending coffee addiction. As a pre-service teacher, you are my mentors, and it is an honor to share and learn from each of you.

As the end of August arrives, the first day of school still gives me a chill, but then, the routine settles in, the air becomes crisp, and I feel a sense of peaceful excitement knowing that in less than two years, I’ll have students to share it with in a classroom that will become our second home. I will be making a difference. I can’t fathom my excitement for pedagogy dulling down, not as a student, and certainly not as a teacher. I hope my classroom forever becomes crisp and colorful in the fall, and bright and blooming during the spring.

Take a moment to cherish the crisp new beginning that you and your students are embarking on this autumn. Fall in love with the squeaking of the desks being rearranged, the feeling of fresh markers on the dry erase board, and the joyous fresh faces of students relishing the change they, too, are experiencing. Life is starting all over again—don’t let it pass your classroom by.

Sarah Metcalf
SCAMLE Newsletter Editor

Welcome to the 2014-2015 School Year!

Welcome to the 2014-2015 school year! It is my sincere hope each of you had a wonderful summer filled with exciting adventures and relaxing times with friends and family. As with any new year, we are faced with new challenges and opportunities. I want to take a moment and encourage each of you to turn every challenge into an opportunity.

The SCAMLE has taken this year to grow and develop so we can better impact our members. It is our goal to keep you informed of events that affect middle level education and provide resources for you to use for net-working and instruction. If there is anything we can do to better serve you while you move forward, please let us know.

As we embark on what is sure to be a wonderful new journey, take care of yourself as much as you do the students whose lives you touch each day. Have a remarkable year!

Melissa Mitchum
President, SCAMLE
secondary education, and associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

Mrs. Allen was president of the SCMSA from 2003 to 2004. Since 2007, she has served as the Executive Director of the SCMSA. Her expertise and firm foundation in best practices at the middle level and belief in the Schools To Watch program make her an excellent choice for the National Forum presidency.

The Forum seeks to make high quality middle-grades education the norm across the country and unites over 50 organizations and leaders in its mission. Schools To Watch is a signature initiative of the Forum involving 18 states and over 350 schools nationally. In addition, the Forum’s U. S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation 2010 Development Grant works intensively in Illinois, California, and North Carolina in 18 turn-around schools.

Evaluation results show changes in culture and collaboration, instructional practices, and leadership have positively impacted student achievement. Evaluation of the I3 work in reading and mathematics scores in the 18 schools reflect a positive overall trajectory with reading scores increasing in 33/51 data points and mathematics scores increasing in 30/51 data points.

As stated by Debby Kasak the Executive Director of the National Forum, “Under Linda’s leadership, the Forum will strive to fulfill its mission of uniting key stakeholders to speak with a common voice to leverage research, policy, leadership, and replicable model practices to drive middle grades reform.” We are definitely enriched by Mrs. Allen’s efforts on a daily basis, and we are extremely proud to have a South Carolinian serve as President of a national organization.

Learn it & APPly it!

**STEM incorporation?**
There’s an app for that!

*NOVA Elements* by PBS
Students will explore the periodic table, think deeply and build their own atoms! Kids must take their time and think thoroughly, a mistake can lead to the atom exploding!

**College and Career Ready ELA?**
There’s an app for that!

*Subtext* by Renaissance Learning
Analyzing? Making connections? Articulating thoughts? Subtext allows students to visualize critical thinking questions while reading passages. Kids will then be able to begin thinking about connections from text, to reality.

**Research Projects?**
There’s an app for that!

*Easy Portfolio* by The PE Geek Apps
Creating a manila folder full of annotations and articles has become a thing of the past. Students can now utilize devices to save all their information in one digital portfolio. Links, documents, videos, and pictures come together to fill this researchers’ resource!
Midlands Showcase of Learning

On April 4, 2014, seventy plus educators from across the Midlands gathered for the first Showcase of Learning hosted by Meadow Glen Middle School in Lexington. The day began with a keynote presentation by Jason Fulmer, (Associate Program Consultant for New Teacher Induction at New Teacher Center) and Darleen Sutton, current SC Teacher of the Year. Jason and Darleen shared strategies on how to grow and empower teacher leaders at the school level.

Participants enjoyed a presentation on Growth Mindset facilitated by Mary Gaskins. In this session, participants explored the power of a growth mindset, the belief that intelligence and ability are a result of effort, strategies for teaching students how to respond when faced with frustration and failure, and the positives that come from experiencing challenge. Additionally, they explored the self-management and learning-to-learn skills that students need in order to engage in deep and meaningful learning.

The Lexington One Technology Integration Specialists offered sessions entitled Learn Outstanding Strategies with Technology (LOST). They demonstrated technology-infused learning strategies for all subject areas. Participants left with ideas and resources they could implement immediately!

We encouraged participants to also conduct learning walks throughout the school. During this session, teacher leaders and administrators visited classrooms to see a variety of instructional strategies in practice. At the conclusion of each visit, participants shared “Two Pluses and a Wonder” to the classroom teacher.

This spirit of collaboration will be spread throughout Midlands area schools as different districts host the Showcase of Learning each year. The 2014-15 Showcase of Learning will be hosted by Richland School District Two.

Super Spectacular Saturday SCAMLE Super Regional PD

We are proud to announce an Upper Midlands-Piedmont super-regional conference to provide a wide selection of current, research-based, effective professional development right here in our own backyard. Sponsored by SCAMLE and Pearson, the super-regional conference is open to teachers, administrators, and media specialists who seek some “one stop shopping” professional development for this school year in a local conference setting. Take advantage of conference session topics to include: creative technology integration, hands-on learning strategies, cross-content literacy, effective utilization of non-fiction texts in all subject areas, working the co-teaching model to meet the needs of all of your students, and many others. This super-regional conference will be held at McCracken Middle School in the Spartanburg 7 district on November 8, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Space is limited, so registration is required for this conference event. The cost of registration will be $10 for teachers at non-member schools and $5 for teachers from member schools. More information is soon to follow.

What:
Upper Midlands-Piedmont Super-Regional Conference

When:
November 8
9:00am—1:00pm

Where:
McCracken Middle School
Registration will begin at 6:00 pm to coincide with the opening of the Exhibit Hall. The schedule is posted on the website, www.scamle.org. In response to comments on the evaluations, we are exploring additional opportunities to visit the exhibitors. Audrey Lancaster, Vendor Chair, has been working very hard to add new exhibitors. If you have suggestions for exhibitors, please send Audrey the name and contact information so she can follow up on your suggestion. Her address is awlancer@charter.net.

The SCAMLE website contains information concerning conference registration and hotel reservations. Additionally, the application for student entertainment and vendor information are also on the website. Register early to take advantage of the “Early Bird” rate. Special rates are also offered for SCAMLE members. If you haven’t renewed your 2014-15 membership, the application can be completed on the website. A list of institutional members is included in the newsletter. Check the list to see if your school is included.

We are excited about another incredible conference and look forward to seeing you there!

Sarah Gullick
SCAMLE Conference Chair

### CALLING ALL PRESENTERS!

We want your best! Come share your ideas and experiences!

**Deadline for Submission is October 31, 2014**

If your school has an exemplary program or outstanding teachers to highlight, consider sharing ideas and programs with other middle level educators by applying to be a presenter. Presenters are required to register for the conference. Visit www.scamle.org for more information!
South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education

Dr. Randy Wall Distinguished Service Award

The Dr. Randy Wall Distinguished Service Award was established to honor the work of Dr. Wall. Dr. Wall was passionate about middle level education, having served as a middle level teacher and administrator and serving the South Carolina Middle School Association as the first president to serve a two-year term. Dr. Wall was also instrumental in helping South Carolina become a nationally recognized Schools to Watch state.

The Dr. Randy Wall Distinguished Service Award recognizes significant contribution(s) of an individual, school, or organization. The winner must exhibit a considerable, long-term impact on the advancement of middle level education in South Carolina. The contribution could be in one or more of the following areas: service, leadership, and/or research.

Congratulations to our 2012, 2013 and 2014 recipients, Dr. Phyllis Pendarvis of MLTEI, Dr. Baron Holmes of SC EOC, and Linda Allen of SCMSA.

South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education

Dr. Jennifer L. Wilson Teaching Excellence Award

The Dr. Jennifer L. Wilson Teaching Excellence Award was established to honor the work of Dr. Wilson after her untimely death in 2011. Dr. Wilson was an associate professor of middle level education and literacy at the University of South Carolina who was well known throughout the state and nation as a passionate teacher and a tireless advocate for young adolescent education. She served the SCMSA as editor of the SCMSA Journal and as a board member, and she was actively involved in the work of the Middle Level Teacher Education Initiative sponsored by the SCMSA.

The Dr. Jennifer L. Wilson Teaching Excellence Award recognizes significant contributions of a classroom teacher, literacy leader, or teacher educator who has had a significant long-term impact on the advancement of middle level teaching excellence in South Carolina schools or colleges and universities. The contribution may be in service, leadership, and/or research.

Congratulations to our 2012, 2013 and 2014 recipients, Dr. Delayne Johnson of Clemson University, Tara Nanke of Fulmer Middle School, and Dr. Robert Vanderburg of Claflin University.

Do you know someone worthy of this honored prestige?

The application consists of the nomination data form including a one-page narrative and two letters of recommendation.

The nomination packet must be submitted electronically by November 30th to Angie Rye, arye@lex3.k12.sc.us

Letters of recommendation should be postmarked no later than November 30th to:

SCAMLE Distinguished Service Award Committee
Attn: Angie Rye
425 Shealy Road
Batesburg, SC 29006

Do you know someone worthy of this award?

The application consists of the nomination data form including a one-page narrative and two letters of recommendation.

The data information form must be submitted electronically by November 30th to ppendarvis@sc.rr.com and the letters of recommendation should be postmarked no later than November 30th. Send your recommendations to:

SCAMLE Teaching Excellence Award Committee
Attn: Phyllis W. Pendarvis, PhD
406 Sulgrave Drive
Columbia, SC 29210
South Carolina Designates Five 2014 National Schools to Watch!

Through the Schools to Watch initiative, the National Forum identifies schools across the United States that are well on their way to meeting the Forum’s criteria for high performance. Forum members believe that three things are true of high-performing middle-grades schools. They are academically excellent, developmentally responsive, and socially equitable. More information about the Schools to Watch initiative is available at www.schoolstowatch.org. The South Carolina Schools to Watch team is pleased to report that one school was named as a new School to Watch, two schools were redesignated, and two schools were designated for a third time.

Campobello Gramling School in Spartanburg District One was named South Carolina’s newest School to Watch. Campobello Gramling is a K-8 grade school whose academic program was praised for its emphasis on standards driven curriculum taught through a variety of strategies, including learning centers, small group instruction, and technology. Administrators and teachers meet frequently to analyze data and monitor student progress. The Schools to Watch team observed an inviting school atmosphere where students are valued and respected by the staff. The focus of the staff members is on meeting students’ needs inside and outside the classroom. The entire staff holds itself accountable for the success of the students.

Blythewood Middle School in Richland School District Two, Castle Heights Middle School in York School District Three, Palmetto Middle School in Anderson School District One, and T.E. Mabry Middle School in Spartanburg School District One were redesignated as SC Schools to Watch after successfully completing a re-assessment and review of their programs. Castle Heights and T.E. Mabry were originally designated in 2011. Blythewood and Palmetto were originally designated in 2008 and redesignated in 2011.

Blythewood Middle School is a school organized for success. There is a sense of ownership by staff and the community in the school’s mission and purpose. The school staff uses data to review past performance and make changes to increase student success on a regular and consistent basis. Respect is modeled by students and staff, and the environment is warm, friendly and caring.

Castle Heights Middle School teachers embrace the collaborative planning process. Classrooms are inviting and student-friendly, and all faculty and staff members care about each student which is evidenced in the way they interact with them. The administration and faculty are united in their passion for growth and development towards excellence. They have embraced This We Believe.

The motto of Palmetto Middle School, One School, One Vision; Our Success, is embraced by the school family. Students are held to high academic standards and are provided a variety of ways to meet them. The school is student-centered as well as family-centered. Parents state that teachers treat students as if they were their own children.

At T.E. Mabry Middle School there is a strong sense of family and community. The theme, Do the Right Thing for Every Child, Each and Every Day, is shared by the entire school family. The faculty has embraced Schools To Watch and Making Middle Grades Work criteria. Data is analyzed regularly and then used to make curriculum and professional development decisions.

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform is an alliance of 65 educators, researchers, national associations and officers of professional organizations and foundations dedicated to improving education in the middle grades. Its website—www.schoolstowatch.org—features online tours of schools and detailed information about the selection criteria used in the recognition program.

South Carolina’s STW program is sponsored by the South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education, South Carolina Association of School Administrators-Middle Level Principals, and the Middle Grades Initiative.
Each summer, the Schools to Watch team provides opportunities for schools and middle level educators to take part in training to promote Schools to Watch. This year, our trainings were held at Airport High School in Lexington. The STW Workshop was held on July 31 and focused on schools that want to utilize the Schools to Watch Framework for continuous school improvement. During this time schools learned about Schools to Watch, the practices that identify high performance cultures and strategies to promote growth in middle level education. Participants collaborated on strategies to implement the STW rubric, examined practices of high performance, and heard from several schools who utilize the rubric for school improvement. The STW Training was held on August 1, 2014 and prepared participants to become members of the SC STW State Team. The state team reads/scores applications and visits schools recommended by the reading team. Participants learned to review applications of potential schools to watch to determine if a site visit should be conducted. Workshop participants worked with teams to determine the school’s ability to meet the rigorous requirements for being named a school to watch.

Over the course of the two days, 150 middle level educators from across the state learned more about the great opportunities available to schools who partner with Schools to Watch sites and utilize the rubric for continuous growth. The goal of the Schools to Watch state team is to ensure that schools have the opportunity to learn about implementing the rubric and strategies, and to receive support with implementation. Participants left the workshop with ideas about implementation and with many ideas from STW schools around the state.

Be on the lookout for future training opportunities and more information about becoming a School to Watch in South Carolina! The STW professional development opportunities are offered at no cost to schools and are sponsored by the South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education, South Carolina Association of School Administrators-Middle Level Principals, and the Middle Grades Initiative. Our goal is to get more and more schools using the framework for improvement AND having more and more named Schools to Watch!
**Meet the SCAMLE 2014-2015 Institutional Members**

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**Interested in joining SCAMLE?**

Visit [www.scamle.org/membership](http://www.scamle.org/membership)
Meet the SCAMLE Executive Board

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David McDonald, President-Elect/Treasurer/SCASA Rep.
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