



South Carolina Professors of Middle Level Education (SCPOMLE)

February 28, 2020 Minutes

Members present: Stephen Bismarck, Chris Burkett, Nate Carnes, Reed Chewning, Bridget Coleman, Walter Lee, Stacy Martin, Lienne Medford, Deborah McMurtrie, Gary Senn, Randy Stowe, Katie Walker, Toni Williams, and David Vawter

Guests: Dixon Brooks, Latoya Curry-Jones, Tina Jamison, Pam Millikan, Libby Ortmann, and Gail Vawter

Call to Order

David Vawter called the meeting to order at 8:47 am. He thanked the South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education (SCAMLE) and the South Carolina Middle Grades Initiative (SCMGI) for their support of SCPOMLE.

AMLE Updates

Pam Millikan brought greetings from AMLE. Pam was a middle school principal for 25 years in Franklin, Indiana. She is an AMLE past president and is now back on the board. AMLE is releasing a new edition of *This We Believe* in November at the conference in National Harbor, MD. They are adding more about research, social emotional learning, and equity. Dr. Penny Bishop and Dr. Lisa Harrison are leading this effort. Pam is serving on a new committee focused on CMLA and they are looking for input to grow that group. AMLE has a new CEO, Stephanie Auditore. The new CAEP director is Dr. Ellis Heard. AMLE presentation proposals are due in March.

SCAMLE Updates

Dixon Brooks reported there are 880 SCAMLE conference registrants this year with more expected onsite. They anticipate a good turnout for the Middle Level Institute. There are a few changes to the conference schedule. The business meeting will take place at 5:45 pm Thursday, followed by a 6:00 pm "Meet and Greet" with cash bar to encourage educators to meet with region directors. SCAMLE wants to encourage more pre-service teacher participation; grants are available, so please seek them out. We have 13 pre-service teachers presenting and 7 more attending. Tina Jamison reported more regional outreach efforts this year. We have a new SCAMLE website and a new webinar in the works.

Schools to Watch Updates

We have the largest number of Schools to Watch ever this year: 5 schools applied and 4 were named; 10 were up for re-designation and 9 were named. We expect those numbers to increase next year. Tina Jamison's job at the State Department will be changing, so she will be stepping down from her Schools to Watch (STW) role. Latoya Curry-Jones will take over as co-

director. Please consider serving STW by reading applications and/or serving on teams to visit schools.

South Carolina Middle Grades Initiative (SCMGI) Updates

Chris Burkett reported that SCMGI provided micro-grants for 19 certified teachers from 16 different schools and 26 teacher candidates from 5 institutions of higher education. The deadline was in November and may be slightly earlier next year. Please encourage students to apply. Preservice candidates can submit a request for funding without presenting, though priority is given to presenters. Consider having juniors attend the conference and then return as seniors to present. He will send reminders. SCAMLE, SCMGI, and the National Forum for Middle Grades Reform are partnering to offer half-day and full-day professional learning opportunities for schools. The Middle Grades Leadership Seminar modules include *The Middle School Concept*, *Young Adolescents at Risk*, *Developmentally Responsive Schools*, *Growth Mindset*, and more. A multi-institution higher education group met in July to develop a proposal for middle grades content area literacy.

Updates from the Office of Educator Effectiveness & Leadership Development

Libby Ortmann reported that registration for Coaching Conversations is open. This training takes participants deeper into the skills needed to give teachers high-quality feedback using the SCTS 4.0 rubric. It is open to educators who want to improve their coaching skills, even to non-evaluators. Sadly, 89% of our teachers do not think of themselves as leaders. Leadership training may help retain teachers, by changing a top-down culture to transformation from within. Libby's office is also working on:

- Building Instructional Capacity- designed to support principals, APs, ICs and teacher leaders. They suggest that schools send a team.
- Instructional Leadership Academy- designed to support 1st and 2nd year assistant principals. They focus on leading adults, understanding state and federal requirements, vision, data literacy, and building a community of support.
- Special Area Evaluation- they are drafting revised guidelines to evaluate library/media, school counselor, and speech & language personnel. There is a feedback survey on the website.
- Scaling Collective Leadership initiative- The micro-credentials through personalized professional learning project is now in year 2 (implementation year). The majority who have applied have been middle schools.

Randy Stowe asked: What was the impetus for licensing by exam? (add-on certification if you are already licensed in another area). This is where we may lose the focus on the middle school concept. Chris Burkett replied that offering more avenues for certification is in response to the teacher shortage, which is not unique to SC.

Updates from South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement

Todd Scholl was unable to attend, but the SC Annual Educator Supply and Demand Report can be accessed on the CERRA website at <https://www.cerra.org/supply-and-demand.html>.

- Approximately 6,650 teachers (in FTEs) left their position during or at the end of the 2018-19 school year. This is a 9% decrease compared to the number of teachers who left during or at the end of the 2017-18 school year.
- Of the first-year teachers hired for the 2018-19 school year, 28% did not return to the same position in 2019-20. This percentage is down from 34% last year.
- Districts reported 555.5 teaching positions in SC public school classrooms that were still vacant at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year. This number represents an 11% decrease compared to last year.

Discussion

- Walter Lee noted that teacher shortage/retention data is a symptom, not a cause.
- Lienne Medford noted that we can't recruit our way out of the problem due to working conditions and added responsibilities (including Saturdays), low pay, perceived lack of support, heavy workload, and no voice.
- Katie Walker shared her experience with an entire team of first year teachers who were overwhelmed, dealing with maxed out class sizes, had no support, and were chided when they cried or broke down. They also have huge student loans.
- Rock Hill is offering a \$1,000 signing bonus that you get at the end of the year. Presumably that encourages teachers to finish the year.
- Many of our candidates have jobs before they even intern. But poor districts are at a disadvantage because they may not be able to offer open-ended contracts.
- Some middle schools are reverting to the junior high school model, and away from developmentally responsive, teaming, advisory, middle school concept.
- Nate Carnes asked, Why are we pushing content down earlier? For example, Algebra I has been moved down to 7th grade. Many students aren't ready.
- We all need to advocate for middle level and to educate/inform/remind individuals. Talk to school board representatives locally. Encourage teacher candidates to choose schools that fit the philosophy. Talk to our state department folks. Vote in the people who get it. Too many schools are doing what's best for adults, not for kids.

SePoMLE Symposium Updates

The Southeastern Professors of Middle Level Education Symposium will be held May 15 & 16, 2020 at UNC Asheville. Nancy Ruppert would be here today but she has jury duty. Bridget Coleman shared a flyer. There will be speed sessions as well as opportunities for networking. There are 2 housing options: You can stay on campus for \$138 for both nights or stay at the Four Points Sheraton in Asheville at \$100 per night (special rate cut off is 4/13/20). Please encourage teacher candidates to attend. Cost is only \$25.

NaPoMLE Updates

Gary Senn reminded us that NaPoMLE will have a best practices session at the AMLE conference in National Harbor, MD (November 12-14, 2020). Please consider submitting a proposal; watch for the call in mid-April. There are opportunities to serve in the organization. An institutional membership is \$75.

Updates from Institutions

Winthrop University: Stacy Martin is the middle level program director. They are implementing one content area in the fall with all new programs of study. They are struggling to attract Collegiate Middle Level Association (CMLA) members. They are addressing negative public perceptions of middle level education and focusing on retention of middle level majors using strategies such as pairing freshman with seniors in a mentoring relationship, having seniors come in and help teach ML101, fun cohort activities, bringing in 1st and 2nd year teachers who are alumni to make presentations, and taking field trips to a middle school that is positive, hosted by alumni and the principal.

USC: Nate Carnes reported that he is no longer the coordinator and they have some people retiring. They have stuck with dual areas of certification, which is more attractive to employers, and have had some growth. They are not struggling with numbers. Toni Williams reported that previous students come in and do a teacher talk. Their 1st year and 5th year teacher panel has been very successful. To recruit for CMLA, they have started reaching out to candidates earlier and are bringing in sophomores to get them actively involved. They get together to work on presentations and take students to conferences. They are taking advantage of micro-grants to build their professional capacity. Word of mouth is powerful.

USC Upstate: Stephen Bismarck is chair of the department. He reported that they are moving to one content area for the fall. They are working to embed experiences in courses, not just clinicals. Some of their top students may be selected for an internship track where they don't student teach. Districts are pushing for it. However, they may be placed in classrooms that veteran teachers don't want and have limited support. Walter Lee coordinates the Call Me Mister program at Upstate and they have 3 fine young men. He is co-chair of the Diversity Summit to be held on March 18-19, and Colin Powell is a featured speaker. Walter reported that some of his Call Me Mister candidates don't want to remain in SC because it's not progressive enough. They may do Teach for America or change their major.

Converse: Lienne Medford reported that they offer the MAT only and in one area. Most are ELA and Social Studies majors. They did not hire another person. The program is not growing. Students have jobs before they finish.

USC Aiken: Bridget Coleman reported that moving to one content area has not spiked the numbers but they are hopeful. Now that candidates are taking more content courses, they will track the expected rise in Praxis II scores. They have low numbers for middle level math majors and are looking at replacing two math courses that never make because of low numbers. Randy Stowe has attended the SCAMLE conference 30 years and worked for 37 years at the school district. Bridget Coleman, Deborah McMurtrie, and Gary Senn presented at the European League for Middle Level Education in Budapest, Hungary in January.

Business Meeting

1. The minutes from last year's meeting were approved.

2. Officer reports: Deborah McMurtrie will send out our SCPoMLE contact list for everyone to review. Representatives, please contact your colleagues and send Deborah any updated contact information. Bridget Coleman reminded us that we all need to reach out to colleagues and let people know we are involved in SCAMLE, SCPoMLE, AMLE, and NaPoMLE.
3. New business: Dave Vawter suggested that we consider using some of our meeting time next year to discuss developing a research agenda. We could collaborate across institutions on topics such as resilience, retention, etc. We used to meet until 3:00 pm but changed to a ½ day meeting because of the Middle Level Institute. Do we want to commit to an extended day next year? We could ask SCAMLE if we could have our own session for the afternoon. We could offer two 15-minute speed learning sessions like NaPoMLE. These working groups may attract other professors.
4. Elections: Deborah McMurtrie and Stacy Martin were nominated to serve a second term and both were approved by acclamation. Walter Lee was nominated and unanimously elected as Representative At-large. SCPoMLE Officers are elected for 2-year terms.
5. Gary Senn was appointed as SCPoMLE’s Technology Coordinator. He can be reached at GaryS@usca.edu.

SCPoMLE Elected Officers

President	David Vawter vawterd@winthrop.edu	Winthrop University	term expires 2022
Past President	Bridget Coleman bridgetc@usca.edu	USC Aiken	term expires 2022
President-Elect	Toni Williams tmwilli2@sc.edu	USC	term expires 2022
Secretary/Treasurer	Deborah McMurtrie deborahmc@usca.edu	USC Aiken	term expires 2022
Representative Private Colleges/Universities	Marla Sanders msanders@columbiasc.edu	Columbia College	term expires 2021
Representative Public Colleges/Universities	Nate Carnes ncarnes@mailbox.sc.edu	USC	term expires 2021
Representative At-large	Walter Lee WLEE2@USCUPSTATE.EDU	USC Upstate	term expires 2022
Representative At-large	Stacy Martin martinsp@winthrop.edu	Winthrop University	term expires 2022

Appointed Board Members

- CHE:
- CERRA: Todd Scholl
- SC DOEd: Libby Ortmann
- SCAMLE: Tina Jamison
- SCMGI: Chris Burkett

- **Stay Connected:**
 - SCPoMLE <https://www.usca.edu/education/scpomle/>
 - NaPoMLE <https://www.napomle.com/>
 - SCMG I <https://cep.sc.gov/about-us/sc-middle-grades-initiative>

- **Publishing Opportunities:**
 - SCAMLE Journal <http://www.scamle.org/publications.html>
 - AMLE *Middle School Journal*
<http://www.amle.org/Publications/MiddleSchoolJournal/tabid/175/Default.aspx>
 - AMLE Magazine
<http://www.amle.org/Publications/AMLEMagazine/tabid/176/Default.aspx>
 - AMLE *Research in Middle Level Education Online*
<http://www.amle.org/Publications/ResearchinMiddleLevelEducationOnline/tabid/173/Default.aspx>
 - CIMLE *Current Issues in Middle Level Education*- <https://www.napomle.com/cimle>

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah McMurtrie