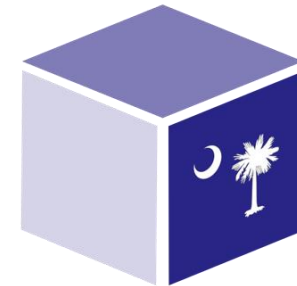


The Application Process for Applying to be a School to Watch



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Schools to Watch® Partners



SOUTH CAROLINA
MIDDLE GRADES INITIATIVE

Agenda

- I. Vision and Mission**
- II. Eligibility Requirements**
- III. Becoming a School to Watch**
- IV. Obligations of Schools to Watch**
- V. Preparing to Apply**
- VI. The Application Process**
- VII. After Submitting the Application**
- VIII. Preparing for the Site Visit**
- IX. STW Timeline**
- X. Helpful Hints**
- XI. Q&A**

Mission and Vision of STW

Mission

To develop, identify, honor, and nurture schools with middle -level grades that are **academically excellent, developmentally responsive, socially equitable, organized and structured for continuous improvement,** and are exemplars of the implementation of the National Forum's Schools to Watch criteria

Vision

Every middle-grades student will attend a school that is **academically excellent, developmentally responsive, socially equitable, organized and structured for continuous improvement,** and is an exemplar of the implementation of the National Forum's Schools to Watch criteria.

Eligibility Requirements

- **Must have been in existence with a middle-level program for at least 3 years**
- **Public and or publicly funded charter schools may apply**
- **Must serve young adolescents, 10-15 years old in schools that meet the STW criteria**
- **Designation as a STW is solely based upon the degree of implementation of the National Forum's 37 STW criteria**
- **State programs cannot charge schools a fee to become a STW**

Benefits of Becoming a School to Watch

- Network of schools across the state and country
- Accountability system based on researched practices and criteria
- Process of growth over-time
- “umbrella” effect of school leadership and development
- Celebration of your accomplishments as a school
- Recognition at a [SC State Board Meeting](#)

Obligations of Schools to Watch

- Using and following the criteria in every facet of the school
- Continuing to attend trainings and opportunities for schools
- Being a model school for others in the state and nation
- Serve as advocates for Middle Level Education
- Delegation to the SCAMLE Conference each year and present
- In the year of designation and re-designation, send a group to Washington DC to attend the national conference
- Be ON CALL for others!

Preparing to Apply

- **Engage yourself and staff in a deeper understanding of Schools to Watch®**
 - **Become familiar with the STW protocol, initial designation and redesignation application and process**
 - **Provide informative and commitment information to the entire staff**
 - **Secure access and have staff to complete the National Forum's STW Online Self-Study Rating Rubric**
 - **Convene a group of leaders to assist with the application process**

Where to Access the Application

- The 2021 application is located on the [SCAMLE](#) website.



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Where to Access the Application



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- Schools to Watch
- Schools
- STW Criteria
- Schools to Watch Application
- Schools to Watch Self Rating Rubric
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Schools to Watch News



The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform in 2006 accepted South Carolina into its state Schools to Watch program. South Carolina's collaborating partners are:
South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education

The Application Process: Step 1

- Assemble an Application Writing Team
- Become familiar with and thoroughly study the four-part application.



The Application Process: Step 2

- Secure access to the National Forum's STW online Self-Study Rating Rubric
- All certified staff must participate in this on-line data collection process in order to submit an eligible initial designation application for review.
- **Initial designation** applications that are submitted by schools that have not completed the online data collection component will not be reviewed

The Application Process:

Step 3

- Gather the required information and complete Part I of the STW initial designation application (Descriptive Information)
- Upload the document using the following naming convention: state abbreviation, school name, demographics2021

Example: SCWindserMiddleDemographics2021



The Application Process:

Step 4

- Complete Part II of the STW Application (Narrative)
- Section A
 - For each of the four domains(Academic Excellence, Developmental Responsiveness, Social Equity and Organizational Structures and Processes)write a 1-2 page narrative substantiating your school's ratings for the domain criteria
 - Be as detailed as possible within the space provided
- Upload using the following naming convention: state abbreviation, school name, STWdomains2021

Example: SCWindserMiddleSTWdomains2021

The Application Process: Step 4 cont...

- **Section B**
 - **Write a two page narrative explaining your school's plans for the future**
 - I. Identified priority need areas, action plans, anticipated outcomes, and expected support from the school's upper administration**
 - II. Steps the school intends to take in the future to orient and acclimate new staff to ensure they are familiar with the STW program and the culture and expectations of the school**

The Application Process: Step 4 cont...

III. Upload the document using the following naming convention: state abbreviation, school name, Futureplan

Example: SCWindserMiddleFutureplan2021



The Application Process:

Step 5

- Complete Part III of the application (Recent Changes) that asks for specific information on any changes in the school in the past year
- Provide additional information on what has happened over the past year that may or may not have had an impact on your school

The Application Process: Step 5 cont...

Consider....

- 1. Changes in upper administration and/or building-level administration**
- 2. Turnover in the teaching staff**
- 3. Budget issues faced by the school that impact middle-grades programming**
- 4. Changes in the school's organization, structure, program, or demographics**
- 5. Major changes in the master schedule**
- 6. Changes in how students are grouped and/or assigned to classes**

The Application Process: Step 5 cont..

- Upload the document using the following naming convention: state abbreviation, school name, Recentchanges2021

Example: SCWindserMiddlerecentchanges2021



The Application Process: Step 6

- Sign Part IV of the application (Assurances)
- Upload the document using the following naming convention: state abbreviation, school name, Assurances2021

Example: SCWindserMiddleassurances2021

The Application Process:

Step 7

- **Submit your application.**
- **Double check to be sure the initial designation application package includes:**
 - **Part I (Descriptive Information)**
 - **Part II (Narrative);-Part III (Recent Changes)**
 - **Part IV (Assurances)**
 - **Completed STW Self-Study Rating Rubric report**
 - **Copies of schoolwide standardized assessments and any additional data offered in support of your initial designation application**

After Submitting the Application

- **Applications will be read by a state team and final determinations will be made by the State Director(s) as to whether or not a school should be given a site visit**
- **The State Director(s) will help schools not visited establish a set of procedures to move them toward submission of a new application and site visit**
- **There is no probation for schools applying for the first time**

The Site Visit

- **Visits are typically two days**
- **All team members are trained as evaluators**
- **The team will conduct classroom observations and interviews**
- **The State Director will communicate with the principal prior to the visit about what materials and accommodations are needed for the team**



STW Timeline

Process Timeline

Download Application from Website	Spring/Summer
Gather Leadership Team to Plan	Spring/Summer
Complete Self-Study with Faculty	Spring/Summer
Write Narratives About Criteria Areas	Summer/Fall
Submit Application/Self-Study (September 25th)	Fall (Due
Site Visits	Fall-
Winter	
New School(s) Announced	January-February
Present at SCAMLE Conference	March
Celebration of New Schools	Spring
Present at National STW Conference	Summer
Re-designation	Every
three years	

Helpful Hints

- **The entire school should be involved in writing the application.**
 - **School Faculty/Staff**
 - **Parents**
 - **Students**
- **Narrative should be written in one voice representing all**
- **Be specific when referring to initiatives in the narrative section**

Helpful Hints cont..

- **Some things fit multiple areas; write about it once in the best domain**
- **Assume the reader knows nothing about your school**
- **Be sure to tell the story of how you are meeting the criteria**
- **Details are important!**
- **Everyone reading is a middle level educator**

Contact Information

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Schools to Watch® on Social Media



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