

# VIRGINIA MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



## 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*“Engaging the Middle School Brain!”*

**October 20, 2017**

Festival Conference and Student Center

James Madison University

Harrisonburg, VA

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Virginia Schools to Watch	Sandy DuTemple	Director

# 2017 VMSA Conference Schedule

## “At a Glance”

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast Visit Exhibits	
8:30 a.m. –9:45 a.m.	Opening General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and Introductions</li> <li>• Keynote Introduction Keynote Speaker- Dr. John Almarode</li> </ul>	
9:45a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Breakout Session 1 Workshops and Schools to Watch Roundtable Sessions	
11:10 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.	Breakout Session 2 Workshops and Schools to Watch Roundtable Sessions	
12:10 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Hot Buffet Lunch in Ballroom A	
1:10 pm. – 2:10 p.m.	Breakout Session 3 Workshops	
2:10 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.	Snack Break in Ballroom A	
2:20 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Closing General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VMSA and Schools to Watch Recognitions and Awards</li> <li>• Keynote- Dr. John Almarode</li> <li>• Closing Remarks- Dr. Ken Nicely, President, VMSA</li> </ul>	
	<b>Meeting Rooms on Main Level</b>  Allegheny Ballroom A Ballroom B Ballroom C Classroom 2 Classroom 3	<b>Meeting Rooms on Lower Level</b>  Classroom 4 Classroom 5 Classroom 7 Highlands

# 2017 VMSA Conference Schedule

## Conference Registration

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Continental Breakfast  
Visit Vendors/Exhibits

Grand Ballroom Foyer

## Opening General Session

8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

**Welcome, Introductions, and Greetings from AMLE**  
Dr. Ken Nicely, President, VMSA and AMLE Board Member

Grand Ballroom A

### Introduction of Keynote Speaker

Lisa Norris, Associate Executive Director, VMSA

### Opening Keynote Address

#### Dr. John Almarode

#### *Getting Them to Eat Peas When All They Want is Ice Cream*

This keynote will unpack what works best in engaging students in their learning. Blending the science of how we learn with classroom practice, participants will develop a tool kit for grabbing and maintaining student engagement at all three levels (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive) while at the same time increasing learning outcomes.

By the end of this keynote, participants will be able to:

- identify the essential components of an effective & engaging learning experience,
- identify instructional practices in different content areas that work best for learning
- develop a plan for implementing these instructional practices in their own classrooms



## Break

9:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.



## **Breakout Session 1 Workshops**

**10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

### ***Making Culture and Climate Count***

**Allegheny**

**James Garst, Principal and Hunter Routt, Assistant Principal  
Andrew Lewis Middle School**

A positive school culture and climate are perhaps the two most important factors determining overall student success in the middle school years. In this session, we will outline some of the intentional changes that we have made to help promote both culture and climate. The presentation will outline previous years and critical events that have shaped our current mindset.

### ***No Bear Left Behind***

**Ballroom C**

**Rebecca Harmon, Associate Principal, Kume Goranson, Director of Middle School Leadership, Lisa Hogsett, Coordinator of Special Education, and Kristy VanderRoest, Language Arts Department Chair  
Bailey Bridge Middle School**

Join us to learn how our school developed a plan to address the gaps between all students' and special education students' achievement on the Reading SOL. The practices that resulted in 13% growth for SPED scores in just one year will be shared in an interactive and honest way.

### ***Data for Student Achievement Goals and Remediation***

**Classroom 2**

**Megan Baird, Karin Nixon and Andrew Olejer, Deans  
Blue Ridge Middle School**

Assessing indicators, creating a plan, and monitoring student achievement – three tasks necessary to ensuring students find success. Blue Ridge Middle School shares its plan to address the needs of all students. Through focus files, staff identify and monitor students to provide support in reaching academic goals and closing the achievement gaps. Blue Ridge's master schedule supports imbedded resources that students can access throughout their school day. Resources include math and reading labs, structured lunch, structured resource, Thursday school, Achieve 3000, and ALEKS Math. Join this session to learn how we create focus files, embed support programs in the school day, and monitor student progress.

### ***Club Connection: Building Relationships Using School Clubs During the Day***

**Classroom 3**

**Cynthia Lewis, Assistant Principal, Will Waldman, Principal, Ariane Bruce, Social Studies Teacher, Julianne Waldo, School Counselor, Lesley McWilliams, Art Teacher, and Bret Spencer, Dean of Students  
Smart's Mill Middle School**

Smart's Mill M.S. in Leesburg, VA takes advantage of the school day to give students the opportunity to connect with peers and staff through club activities. *Explore*, which pairs with the school advisory program, includes over 50 activities based on student and teacher interest including service, leadership, skills, mentoring, fitness, arts, STEM and more. This interactive session will review the planning process, as well as how the program has been a positive force for the school community, inclusion, and building positive relationships.

## **Breakout Session 1 Workshops**

**10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

### ***Crystal Clear: Our PBIS and Standards-Based Grading and Assessment Journey***

**Classroom 4**

**Todd Yoho, Assistant Principal, Jim Thousand, Teacher on Special Assignment, and Cesar Maisonet, Special Education Teacher  
Gainesville Middle School for the Arts and Sciences**

Over the past few years, Gainesville Middle School for the Arts & Sciences has been on a journey to help students understand what is expected of them, and to increase their "buy-in" to those expectations, both academically and behaviorally. Through our PBIS program, SCORE - Success through Courtesy, Organization, Respect, and Excellence, as well our approach to Standards-based grading that started with clear, student-friendly learning targets, we have traveled many "miles", and we look forward to sharing our lessons learned during the journey!

### ***Keep it Positive***

**Classroom 5**

**Angela Clendenon, Former Principal  
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt**

Coeburn Middle School went from one of the lowest performing schools, to one of the highest in the state of Virginia and even Nationally recognized. Administrators must take a positive approach to all aspects and make the school a safe, secure, hopeful place for everyone. Through the use of relationships and hard work... anything can happen. This presentation would highlight some of the process CMS went through to change the culture of the school and outline how other schools can use these ideas to bring about positive change.

### ***Teaching with the Tonight Show***

**Classroom 7**

**Tracey Zaval, Teacher  
Midlothian Middle School**

Are you looking for ways to bring fun and excitement into your classroom? If so, this session is for you! Come learn how to incorporate the games Jimmy Fallon plays on the Tonight Show into your lessons to increase student engagement through creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. This session will feature the games "Box of Lies", "Five Second Summaries", "Wheel of Freestyle" and "Lip Sync Battle" among others.

### ***Creating a Restorative Culture: Quick Steps to Get You Started***

**Highlands**

**Tracy Myers and Will Gheen, Teachers/Restorative Leaders  
Montevideo Middle School**

A restorative environment is one built on the knowledge that relationship is powerful and proactive in generating a community of care and accountability. In recognizing the importance of this, Montevideo Middle School has chosen to create a whole-school restorative culture. While much of the foundational ideas of restorative practices is already a daily part of our environment at MMS (and probably your school's as well), this initiative creates a consistency where all staff are using the same language, the same practices to proactively and intentionally build relationships and the same practices to address harm. Come spend an hour with us and learn how you can begin implementing restorative practices right away in your own classroom.

## **Breakout Session 1**

### **STW Roundtable Presentations**

Each roundtable presentation will be shared two times during this session.

**10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**



#### ***Co-Teaching Strategies and Best Practices***

**Molly Carroll, Special Education Teacher and Lynae Young, Math 6 Teacher  
Northside Middle School**

**Ballroom B**

This session explains the fundamentals of co-teaching, roles and responsibilities of staff in a collaborative classroom, and the six approaches to co-teaching. We will also discuss tips for success in order to create and maintain a successful collaborative team.

#### ***Heads Up! You Sunk My... Vocab Games***

**Lynn Eckerman, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher and VMSA Teacher of the Year  
Glasgow Middle School**

**Ballroom B**

Across all content areas students are constantly bombarded with new essential vocabulary. Mastery of these new words provides them access to the language that is essential to their success. In this session, you will discover how games like; Heads Up, Battleship and Celebrity can serve as great tools to help learn, review and build a deeper understanding of these key terms. Before you know it, kids will be constructing their own definitions and building strong connections all while having tons of fun. This will be a hands-on session, so come ready to play!

#### ***Equity Through Open Access to All Courses***

**Dr. Calvin Frye, Principal  
Swift Creek Middle School**

**Ballroom B**

Preparation for higher level and AP courses in high school begins in middle school. In this session we will examine how Swift Creek Middle School encourages all of its students to take honors courses and what supports have been put into place to help ensure these students succeed.

#### ***Finding a Focus with Walkthrough Evaluations***

**Kristen Hepner, Dean  
Harmony Middle School**

**Ballroom B**

Harmony Middle School's administrative team has used the walkthrough evaluation process to not only refine feedback given by administrators, but also to identify areas for professional development of teachers. Learn about the team walkthrough process and how to use the data to improve instruction at your school.

#### ***Let's Talk Differentiation***

**Misty Culler, English 7 and 8 Teacher, Ann Fajardo, Algebra I and Geometry Teacher,  
and Todd Murrill, English 6 and 7 Teacher  
Glenvar Middle School**

**Ballroom B**

Glenvar Middle School uses a variety of instructional approaches to modify content, process and/or products in response to learning readiness and interests of academically diverse students. You will meet three middle school teachers who will share their experiences of what they have tried related to their use of differentiation.

## **Breakout Session 2 Workshops**

**11:10 a.m. – 12:10 a.m.**

### ***Building a Collaborative Learning Culture***

**Allegheny**

**Gus Martinez, Principal, Jessica Pineda, Jennifer Miller, and Nicole Akers,  
Instructional Facilitators  
Sterling Middle School**

In this session we will offer leaders ideas on how to build stronger Collaborative Learning Teams and how to spread the Collaborative Culture throughout the school. Strong team relationships and efficient support systems allow for a culture of cohesive instruction, which will positively affect student learning. Topics include: Building capacity in team leaders, effective meeting structures and strategies, building strong relationships, professional development planning and implementation, and providing the proper support system.

### ***Habits of the Mind: Design Thinking***

**Ballroom C**

**Lisa Coates, Exceptional Education (Physical Science)  
Salem Church Middle School**

In this session, will gives teachers the tools and methods they need to apply design thinking—discovery, interpretation, ideation, experimentation and evolution—in real-world scenarios. A creative process that helps you design meaningful solutions in the classroom, at your school, and in your community. Participants we will be taken through a step-by-step process of hosting or participating in a 60-minute design challenge.

### ***You in the Driver's Seat***

**Classroom 2**

**Sarah Slaughter, Ed.D., Principal, and Joel Johnston, Executive Director, Let Me Learn  
Short Pump Elementary School**

If you have found yourself bewildered by the mind of a middle schooler then this workshop is for you. Taking on the role of a MS student, you will complete a learning inventory, develop a personal learning profile, and practice how to explain your learning processes to others. You will also learn how to develop personalized learning strategies so you can self-regulate your responses to class work and social relationships thereby making life, in and out of school, work better for you.

### ***Using Quality Tools and a Collaborative Approach to Systematically Respond to Stakeholder Feedback***

**Classroom 3**

**Dr. Roberta Knetter, Principal, and Koen Madsen, Assistant Principal  
E.H. Marsteller Middle School**

This session focuses on collaboration as a school's Strategic Planning Committee uses quality tools to develop a systematic plan to respond to stakeholder feedback. Participants will engage in a simulation in which stakeholder feedback will be analyzed and categorized. They will use quality tools to find root causes and develop plans with specific strategies and next steps. Participants will also hear about methods for obtaining formative data throughout the year for the purposes of monitoring and adjusting.

## **Breakout Session 2 Workshops**

**11:10 a.m. – 12:10 a.m.**

### ***The "How To" of Schools to Watch***

**Classroom 4**

**Darleen Stigall, Science Teacher, Schools to Watch Committee Chair and Joel Higham, Physical Education Teacher  
Swift Creek Middle School**

If you are considering applying for designation as a School to Watch, then you don't want to miss this session! The presentation could be titled "If I Only Knew Then What I Know Now!" Attendees will be taken step by step from making the decision to start the process, to fulfilling your Schools to Watch obligations once designated.

### ***The Happiness Track - Applying the Science of Happiness In Our Approach to Career and Life Success***

**Classroom 5**

**Tricia O'Connell, Assistant Principal, Susan Keller, Caroline Milne, Nicole Prietti, Elizabeth Scheib and Kelly Revak  
Trailside Middle School**

Trailside Middle School is using "The Happiness Track" by Emma Seppala as our school's book study this year. This book explores the relationship between our fast paced world and finding purpose and sanity in our work/personal life. Dr. Seppala researches the neuroscience of happiness and the factors to consider as we strive for success. This book helps rethink our approach to "success" from overdrive and multitasking to connections and optimism. Research and strategies will be shared.

### ***It's Breakout Time!***

**Classroom 7**

**Caroline Kirsh, Teacher and Tracey Zaval, Teacher  
Robious Middle School and Midlothian Middle School**

Are you searching for innovative ways to cover curriculum, help your students solve problems, collaborate, and develop a growth mindset? Modeled after the Escape Room experience, Breakouts are engaging learning games for learners of all ages that present learners with challenges that ignite their natural drive to problem-solve. Attendees will participate in both a digital and traditional breakout game.

### ***Transformative Learning: Allowing Students to Create Curriculum***

**Highlands**

**William Laney, Instructional Technology Specialist, Keano Rich (HS student) Evan Allen (HS student) Matthew Cheng (HS student) and Ryan Nguyen (HS student)  
Old Donation School**

What would happen if your students had the option to create the entire curriculum for a new course? That's what's taking place at Old Donation School in Virginia Beach, where a group of alumni (now in high school) are putting the finishing touches on a semester-long technology education course that will be taught at ODS starting with the 2018-19 school year. Come hear the story of "Team Techknowledgy's" effort to maximize student engagement and provide authentic learning experiences for middle-school students.

(Repeat of Session 1)

## **Breakout Session 2**

### **STW Roundtable Presentations**

Each roundtable presentation will be shared two times during this session.

**11:10 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.**



#### ***What Was I thinking? Using Test Debriefing to Increase Student Success***

**Ballroom B**

**Sarah Bayer, Sara Anthony, and Kristie Boone, Teachers**  
**Hidden Valley Middle School**

Never go over a test again! Put students in charge of their own learning in peer learning groups. Students in small groups help each other improve their metacognitive awareness and future test performance by analyzing a test after it has been taken.

#### ***Be PROactive Not Reactive!***

**Amanda McCulla, Principal, Ann Bullock, Erin Merrill, and Kristen Kasselder**  
**Pennington Traditional School**

**Ballroom B**

Discover how to create a school-wide consistent model for positive behavior. Come and learn how to use the universal behavioral matrix, provide explicit behavior instruction, and support students with behavioral needs.

#### ***Power C's: Collaboration, Communication, Community, and Connections***

**Shena Ivory-Brown, Assistant Principal and Sarah O'Brien**  
**Stone Hill Middle School**

**Ballroom B**

The presentation will focus on changing the culture of your school through the use of the four C's. Collaboration, Communication, Community, and Connections are essential to create a high performing middle school that is sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence.

#### ***Building a 21st Century School: A Vision in Progress***

**Ballroom B**

**Sybil Terry, Assistant Principal, Gordon Stokes, Principal, Cindy Burgett, Civics Teacher, Leonia Outland, Math Teacher, and Tammy Owens, Special Education Department Chair**  
**Rachel Carson Middle School**

Join us to learn about our school's journey to develop an innovative learning environment with a focus upon 21st Century skills (the 4Cs: communication, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration). We will share examples of how practices and strategies such as emphasis on student-centered learning focus, goal setting, professional development, PBL, and use of instructional technology played essential roles in supporting our progress towards our vision. Further, we will highlight models of how students and teachers engage in this ongoing action and reflection. Be ready to consider steps that can be taken at your school. We intend for this session to provide participants with practical examples for those seeking to incorporate these structures into their school community.



## Lunch

Enjoy a hot buffet lunch and network you're your middle level colleagues!

12:10 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Grand Ballroom A



## Breakout Session 3 Workshops

1:10 p.m. – 2:10 p.m.

### *Comma Trauma and Apostrophe Catastrophes: Collaborative Remedies for Punctuation Problems*

Allegheny

**Liz Phillips, English/World Geography Teacher and Angee Waites Mathematics Teacher**  
**Wallace Middle School**

Tired of red pens and skills data? Sometimes hands-on experience in a collaborative setting is the most effective way to deliver instruction and opportunities to practice the finer points of punctuation. Those skills aren't just for English--they're necessary for mathematics, too! Let's forget those workbooks and online tutorials that promise positive outcomes for all! Try something a little weird! Even go cross-curricular! Something so old, it's new again. Play a round of two of our game, and you just might win some pasta!

### *An "E"asy STEM - SOL-Aligned Engineering Activities*

Ballroom C

**Michael Briscoe, Educator in Residence**  
**American Society of Naval Engineers**

STEM is a big emphasis, but we do so little with the E. The Office of Naval Research granted the American Society of Naval Engineers (ASNE) funds to create engaging engineering curricula aligned to state standards. ASNE now has a free engineering video game, free STEM Club curriculum, texts about engineers with SOL-aligned ELA questions, and supporting math worksheets that highlight engineering concepts. Come to this hands-on presentation to engage in some engineering! ASNE also has \$1,000 grants for schools interested in implementing some of these engineering resources.

### *Functional Fun-Engaging All Students Through Interactive Activities*

Classroom 2

**Jennifer Cain, Special Education Teacher and Jill Meacham, General Education Teacher**  
**William Byrd Middle School**

This session offers hands-on examples and realistic ideas for improving student engagement by implementing games, foldable notes, and movement within the classroom. Ideal for any age group or setting, activities can easily be differentiated to meet the needs of a variety of students within the same classroom.

## **Breakout Session 3 Workshops**

**1:10 p.m. – 2:10 p.m.**

### **Getting Connected to Your Parents**

**Classroom 3**

**Tammy Lightner, 6th Grade Math/Science Teacher  
Wilson Middle School**

Using an interactive and dependable program to communicate, share, and engage parents. This session will give participants the opportunity to learn all about Class DOJO. Bring your device to download and log-in to get started during the session. All you need is your class roster. Learn how to set up blogs, message and keep connected in an effective way.

### ***Designing Clear, Impactful Lessons for Deep Learning and Innovation***

**Classroom 4**

**Julie Stern, Author and Teacher Partner**

The traditional coverage-based curriculum model, which relies on students “doing” thinking verbs with content, rarely produces deep or transferable learning. Students can transfer their learning to new contexts with conceptual understanding. This session will create a dialogue on the following questions: • What does the research tell us about transfer of learning? • Once we have strong conceptual understanding in our written unit plans, how do we design lessons with a clear beginning, middle and end? • How do we use different levels of questions to foster conceptual understanding? • How do we communicate learning intentions and success criteria without revealing “the answer”?

### ***Talk Numbers to Me, Promoting Math Conversations in Your Classroom***

**Classroom 5**

**Carol Walsh  
Middlesex County Public Schools**

The session is designed to encourage number talks on a regular basis in the math classroom. You'll learn the reason why number talks are so important, how to facilitate number talks, and what types of questions to ask.

### ***Culturally Responsive Teaching in a Social Studies Classroom***

**Classroom 7**

**Alex McDonald, Social Studies Teacher and Daniel Woodman, ESOL/Reading Teacher  
Woodbridge Middle School**

This session offers hands-on examples and realistic ideas for improving student engagement by implementing games, foldable notes, and movement within the classroom. Ideal for any age group or setting, activities can easily be differentiated to meet the needs of a variety of students within the same classroom.

### ***Creating a Restorative Culture: Quick Steps to Get You Started***

**Highlands**

**Tracy Myers and Will Gheen, Teachers/Restorative Leaders  
Montevideo Middle School**

A restorative environment is one built on the knowledge that relationship is powerful and proactive in generating a community of care and accountability. In recognizing the importance of this, Montevideo Middle School has chosen to create a whole-school restorative culture. This initiative creates a consistency where all staff are using the same language; the same practices to proactively and intentionally build relationships; and the same practices to address harm. Come spend an hour with us and learn how you can begin implementing restorative practices right away in your own classroom.



# Closing General Session and Awards/Recognitions Program

2:20 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

## Virginia Middle School Association Awards Presentation of VMSA Awards

Dr. Ken Nicely, VMSA President

2017 Master in the Middle  
Teacher of the Year

**Lynn Ekerman**  
Glasgow Middle School  
Fairfax County



2017 Master in the Middle  
Educator of the Year

**Kelly Lawton**  
Luray Middle School  
Page County



Special Recognition  
**Dr. Betty Dore**  
VMSA Executive Director  
2011-2017



**Congratulations and thank you  
for your outstanding  
service to middle level education in  
Virginia!**

**Virginia Schools to Watch Recognitions**  
**Presentation of Virginia Schools to Watch Recognitions**  
Sandy DuTemple, Director, Virginia Schools to Watch

**2017 Newly Designated STW**

**Bailey Bridge Middle School**  
Chesterfield County  
Melanie Knowles, Principal

**Robius Middle School**  
Chesterfield County  
Dr. Derek Wasnock, Principal

**Swift Creek Middle School**  
**Chesterfield County**  
Dr. J. Calvin Frye, Principal



**2017 Redesignated STW**

**Blue Ridge Middle**  
Loudoun County  
Brion Bell, Principal

**E.H. Marsteller Middle School**  
Prince William County  
Dr. Roberta Knetter, Principal

**Gainesville Middle School**  
Prince William County  
Catherine Porter-Lewis, Principal

**Harmony Middle**  
Loudoun County  
Eric Stewart, Principal

**Northside Middle School**  
Roanoke County  
Dr. Paul Lineburg, Principal

**Pennington Traditional School**  
Prince William County  
Joyce Stockton, Principal

**Rachel Carson Middle School**  
Fairfax County  
Gordon Stokes, Principal

**Stone Hill Middle School**  
Loudoun County  
Kathryn Clark, Principal

## **Closing Keynote Address**

### **Dr. John Almarode**

#### ***Inspired and Passionate Teachers – Clarity on What Works Best***

Inspired and passionate teachers are by design, not by chance (Fisher, 2016). Whether you are an instructional coach, lead teacher, teacher mentor, or administrator, highly effective teachers are absolutely necessary in the achievement and success of your students.

This closing keynote explores the practices and characteristics of inspired and passionate teachers, and, drawing from the exciting research on the science of learning, introduces a cutting-edge framework for fostering and nurturing highly effective teachers with great success. Audience members will actively participate in the "unpacking" of practices and characteristics of inspired and passionate teachers.



## **Closing Remarks**

Dr. Ken Nicely, President, VMSA

**Thank you for attending the  
2017 VMSA Conference!**

**We hope you found your day  
purposeful and enjoyable, and that you will  
continue to network with your middle  
school colleagues across Virginia  
throughout the school year!**

**Be sure to check the VMSA Web Site for upcoming  
Regional events and information on the Fall 2018  
Conference.**



***In order to strengthen and improve our middle schools,  
we must strengthen and improve ourselves!***

# Festival Conference & Student Center

