



# Irmo Middle School International Academic Magnet Annual School Report 2015—2016

6051 Wescott Road · Columbia, SC 29212 · 803-476-3600 · [www.lexrich5.org/IrmoMS.cfm](http://www.lexrich5.org/IrmoMS.cfm)

## Irmo Middle School Improvement Council Members

### Members

Faith Hunter—Chair  
Greta Avery  
Ashley Hartzog  
L. Thomas Solet  
Brenda Black Weathers  
David Jones  
Timothy Parker

### Appointed Members

Todd Nelson  
Jordan O'Keefe  
Jane Rish  
Toshia Addison  
Kurt Stevens  
Tina Warner

### Faculty Members

Shannon Avery  
Jennifer Cook  
Allison Redick

### Students

Audrey Johnson—8th grade  
Bryson Stutts—7th grade  
Tamia Simpkins—6th grade  
Jenna Stallings—G40

### Ex-Officio Members

Kim Stutts (PTSO)  
Michael Cates (Past Chair)  
Robert Jackson  
Glenn Hutto  
Vernon Sava  
Danielle Major-Murphy



### School Motto

*Creating successful  
students for the  
challenges of tomorrow*

## Annual Message from Robert Jackson, Principal and Faith Hunter, School Improvement Council Chair

As one of the highest performing middle schools in South Carolina, Irmo Middle is a fifteen time recipient of the Palmetto Gold Award for exemplary performance and improvement. Irmo Middle consistently proves that a school with excellent teachers and outstanding parental support can produce outstanding results. In recognition of our excellence, we have again earned a spot in the Top Ten Middle Schools in SC by Niche (website). These results demonstrate that Irmo Middle remains a great choice as one of the top performing schools in the state of South Carolina.

Irmo Middle School serves 925 students in grades sixth to eighth. Next year, we will be enrolling 120 sixth graders, which will enhance continuity for students and families. As an International Academic Magnet, we are able to offer a wide range of high school credit courses in English, mathematics, world languages and STEM Systems. As a result, our students are able to excel on high school readiness assessments. On the EXPLORE and PSAT assessments, a consistent number of students met or exceeded performance benchmarks with several achieving perfect scores. This number has risen substantially over the past five years. Additionally, a significant percentage of our students excel in visual and performing arts, through course offerings, such as band, chorus, dance, and orchestra. This well-rounded approach provides the foundation needed for students to enter the top tier academic programs in high school and beyond.

Our school is helping all students develop the world-class skills and career characteristics of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* by ensuring that all students demonstrate high levels of proficiency through our implementation of the International Academic Magnet. Our school-wide magnet (and partnerships with EL Education, PITSCO Education, and TransformSC) provides opportunities for students to excel through thematic, project-based learning that capstones in experiences called learning expeditions. In small peer groups, students conduct field work and action research (with local field experts) in order to solve real-world problems, where inquiry based learning is facilitated by teachers and aligned with the newly adopted South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards.

As we embrace a climate of continuous school improvement, our guiding principles for instruction will remain grounded in research-based practices and data teams. We constantly seek ways to improve instruction and to increase learning opportunities for our students. Our core practices center around five key dimensions. They include: curriculum, instruction, assessment, culture and character, and leadership. A special emphasis is also placed on advanced technology integration and magnetized thematic instruction, which guarantees each child, in every course, is given multiple opportunities to demonstrate his/her academic proficiency through project and problem based learning. Because of these instructional

practices, we are seeing increased numbers of students embracing the challenge of taking rigorous high school credit courses while still in middle school.

Our dedicated faculty and staff continues to spend many hours participating in school, district and "EL" focused professional development. Teachers share instructional strategies and work in data teams to ensure quality instruction and assessment in all courses. Faculty collaboration and sustained professional learning are key components of our plan for continuous improvement.

One of our hallmarks of success is our high level of parental and community involvement. Our School Improvement Council and our PTSO provide outstanding leadership and support, as well as help to map out the future direction of our school. As we continue to reflect on our desired outcomes and increase conversations about how to improve student learning, we will continue our tradition of excellence at Irmo Middle.

Robert S. Jackson  
Principal

Faith Hunter  
SIC Chairperson



## Irmo Middle School Mission Statement

*The mission of Irmo Middle School is to shape a diverse community where students create high quality work, care for the well being of themselves and others, and engage in meaningful service which impacts local and global communities.*

## Initiatives and Strategies for School Improvement



The Irmo Middle School Improvement Council meets monthly to plan, monitor, and evaluate improvements at the school level. Their work includes school planning, as well as communication between students, teachers, parents, and the school administration.

The Irmo Middle School Family would like to salute our SIC, PTSO, Booster Clubs, parent volunteers, and community supporters for their continuing support. We would also like to thank the School District Five Board of Trustees, and the District Office Staff.

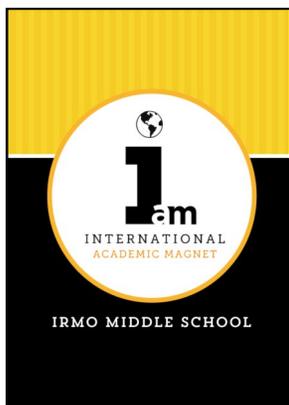
Our PTSO serves as our primary fundraising group for school-wide projects and is the group that organizes and assigns volunteers, works on beautification, supports school celebrations and recognitions, and provides activities for faculty and staff appreciation and support. Our PTSO is a 501.c(3) charitable organization.

- A school-wide magnet initiative has been implemented for grades 6, 7, 8. The theme of our magnet school is international studies. It provides a seamless pathway for our students to gain admittance into the elite International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Irmo High School. In this magnet, students enjoy a global teaching and learning experience that is framed around the research based framework of EL Education.
- EL Education is our primary partner for school improvement, and its five core practices and ten design principles inform school structure. Our school structures and traditions such as Crew, community meetings, exhibitions of student work, and service learning ensure that every student is known and cared for, that student leadership is nurtured, and that contributions to the school and world are celebrated.
- Implementation of PITSCO STEM Systems and Algebra Readiness courses are designed to expose students to a variety of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classroom experiences that are robust and engaging.
- Continued implementation of the data teams process as a core belief improves teacher performance and student learning. Collaboration with other middle school teachers is also a part of our data teams curriculum initiative. Articulation and communication with high schools and the Center for Advanced Technical Studies ensures that our students are well prepared to meet their goals.
- NWEA's (MAP) Measures of Academic Performance is a robust tool for diagnostic assessment. The computer-based MAP program is used three times a year to determine students' skill levels in reading and math.
- Through common formative assessments, cross curricular teachers adopt minute-to-minute and day-by-day assessment-for-learning strategies that have been shown by research to powerfully increase student achievement.
- Individual performance conferences are held with teachers and students regarding MAP performance growth targets and desired outcomes.
- Teachers incorporate 1:1 chromebook technology into all classes with Google Apps for Education during instruction.
- Literacy libraries (with internationally themed titles) are maintained in all classes to support reading and writing initiatives.
- Students receive prescriptive interventions through Literacy Lab, Targeted ELA sections, PITSCO Algebra Readiness, Math Matters, and USA Test Prep.
- Continued facilitation of the Challenging Horizons Program provides after-school interventions and assistance to a targeted group of students.
- Academic Assistance is available for all students during posted times and when otherwise planned.
- School-wide adoption of the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports model is aligned with Expeditionary Learning's Habits of Scholarship.
- Our vision is continuously championed through the use of pervasive norms & communication protocols, interpersonal relationships, and artifacts within classrooms and public spaces.
- The individual learning needs of all students, including high achievers and population subgroups are met through EL Education differentiated instruction and other school structures and processes (Crew).
- Advancing EL Education's relational character and performance character (habits of scholarship) ensures that students meet the profile of the South Carolina Graduate.
- We have plans to offer World Geography in the future and expand our high school credit offerings to include Chinese 1, Computer Applications, and Introduction to STEM Systems. Currently we offer English 1, Algebra 1, Geometry, French 1, Spanish 1, German 1, and Keyboarding. Our End-of-Course Exam results in English 1 and Algebra 1 continue to be in the 99th percentile. Students are afforded the opportunity to take one of four world language offerings or immerse themselves in a visual or performing arts sequence.
- Counselors meet annually with students to develop career goals, select courses, and create a plan to meet each student's desired outcomes. Students and parents work with their counselor and/or the Career Development Facilitator to develop an individual graduation plan (IGP) which will prepare them to graduate high school "college and career ready."
- G20-SLT "Shared Leadership Team" has been working all year to implement our Work Plan Goals (increase student achievement, implement Crew and design/facilitate high quality projects in all classes).
- Teachers and students have been exposed to Digital Citizenship training to prevent cyber-bullying and teach students how to establish a healthy digital footprint and conduct appropriate online discussions.
- Grade Level Crews meet together at our monthly Community Meetings. Community Meetings are a common structure in EL Education Schools that help to build a culture of pride, success and celebration in both academics and character.

**IRMO MIDDLE**  
An International Perspective



EL Education's core practices create school environments that promote deep engagement in learning while supporting students to achieve at high levels.



School  
**CHOICE**  
School District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties

- Each school must be uncommonly good at those things offered by most schools.
- Each school must be GREAT at something not commonly offered in other schools.

Stephen Hefner, Ed.D

## An EL Education School

The mission of Irmo Middle School is to shape a diverse community where students create high quality work, care for the well being of themselves and others, and engage in meaningful service which impacts local and global communities. As a magnet and EL Education school, there are a myriad of opportunities offered to students - from rigorous core courses that infuse global themes into the South Carolina standards, giving students a chance to make authentic connections to real-world scenarios, to unique exploratory courses that allow learners to develop and refine talents and think in new ways. Specifically, because of our designation as an EL school (earned in the spring of 2014), all students participate in Crew - a class structure designed to ensure that all students are known well by an adult and small peer group - and participate in collaborative work designed to yield high quality products and evoke deep thinking around authentic, complex problems.

Our beliefs about how schools look, feel, and function are hinged to the EL Education design principles. Students and staff are encouraged daily to embody the tenets of these principles as they participate in the wonderful process of learning:

**The Primacy of Self-Discovery:** Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. Students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

**The Having of Wonderful Ideas:** Teaching fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

**The Responsibility for Learning:** Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of our school

encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

**Empathy and Caring:** Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones; therefore, students feel physically and emotionally safe.

**Success and Failure:** All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

**Collaboration and Competition:** Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. Students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

**The Natural World:** A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the Earth and of future generations.

**Solitude and Reflection:** Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need time to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.

**Service and Compassion:** We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and our primary function is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.

School culture is created and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become crew, not passengers. This guiding principle rests on the fundamental belief that students are in control of their own learning, not passive receivers of knowledge.

In order to foster this belief and establish and uphold a strong school community, all IMS students participate in Crew, a course that meets weekly on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. During Crew, students develop relationships, dedicate time to service, and engage in conversations and check-ins related to academic progress and other school-related issues. Students have had the opportunity to reflect on grades and the Habits of Scholarship (Integrity, Respect, Motivation & Ownership). This reflection process has helped students to take ownership of their successes and failures, and make plans to achieve their personal best.

Grade Level Crews meet together at our monthly Community Meetings. Community Meetings are a common structure in EL Education Schools that help to build a culture of pride, success and celebration in both academics and character.

We are committed to thinking deeply about issues that matter. We are committed to inspiring students to care about themselves and those around them. We are committed to changing the world.

*Jen Cook*

Jen Cook  
Lead Teacher



# Performing Arts Highlights

- Ten IMS Band students earned spots in the SCBDA Region 2 Honor Band:

C. Boisture  
 R. Lofurno  
 P. Arendash  
 M. Sheldon  
 C. Henke  
 W. Robinson  
 A. Garrett  
 M. Blankenship-Brown  
 R. Barker  
 M. Rattray



- SC Region Orchestra:  
 T. Singh, violin, 8th gr.  
 K. Yang, violin, 7th gr.  
 C. Stringer, violin, 8th gr.  
 K. Aguilar, violin, 8th gr.  
 E. Taylor, violin, 7th gr.  
 Z. Schellinger, viola, 8th gr.



- 23 of our students were members of the Marching Band at Irmo High School.
- Congratulations to IMS students earning seats in the SCBDA SC All-State Band.  
 Abby Jones  
 Claire Henke  
 Cameron Ciriello  
 Isaiah Allgeyer
- The Honor Band received an Excellent rating this year at the SC Concert Performance Assessment in Batesburg Leesville.
- Orchestra students will be attending the Music in the Parks festival at Carowinds in Fort Mill late April.



- SC All-State Orchestra:  
 T. Singh, violin, 8th gr  
 Z. Schellinger, viola, 8th gr
- SC Performance Assessment:  
 8th and Honors Orchestra: Superior  
 Honors Orchestra: Excellent

- Irmo dancers held a Winter Concert themed "Icons". Each class performed works that they had prepared in class to show parents their progress.



- Irmo Middle School students enrolled in Advanced Dance took a trip to Dutch Fork High School. Along with dance students from the entire district, Irmo Middle dancers took classes from local dance artists Caroline Lewis Jones, Stephanie Wilkins, Terrance Henderson and Lindsay Sprague. Participating schools held a benefit concert that evening collecting canned goods for the Harvest Hope Food Bank.



- Irmo Middle School held a course fair in which families could come and see which courses are offered. Select dancers performed some ballet barre movement and spoke to parents and students about the dance program.



iAM...Global Leaders



Robert S. Jackson  
Principal



Glenn Hutto  
A.P. for Instruction



Vernon Sava  
Assistant Principal



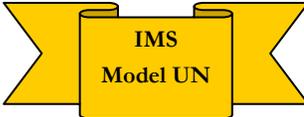
Danielle Major-Murphy  
Assistant Principal

# Visual Arts

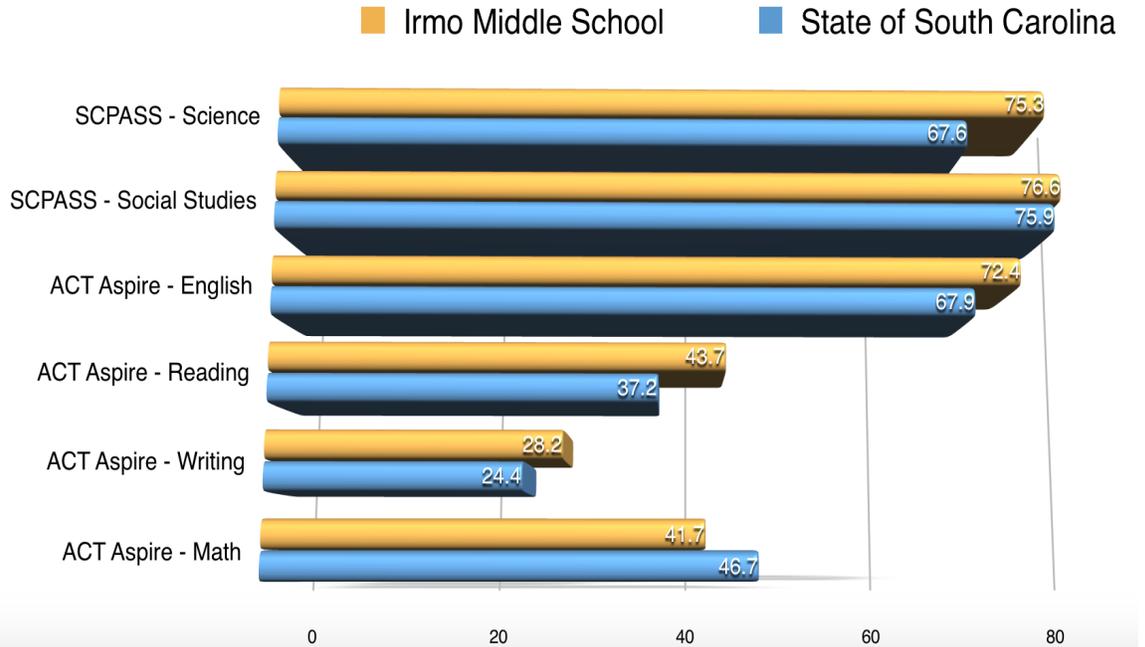
## The 10 Design Principles of Expeditionary Learning Project



## School Testing



Tested Subject	Irmo Middle School	State of South Carolina
SCPASS - Science	75.3	67.6
SCPASS - Social Studies	76.6	75.9
ACT Aspire - English	72.4	67.9
ACT Aspire - Reading	43.7	37.2
ACT Aspire - Writing	28.2	24.4
ACT Aspire - Math	41.7	46.7



## Athletic Teams

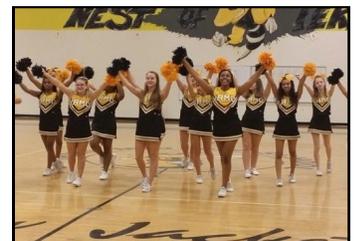
C-Team Football



The C-Team Boys Basketball



C-Team Cheerleading



C-Team Girls Basketball



C-Team Volleyball



C-Team Track and Field



We have several of our students participating in JV sports at Irmo High School:

- JV Soccer
- JV Cross Country
- JV Softball/Baseball
- JV Wrestling
- JV Swim Team
- JV Tennis
- JV Golf
- JV Lacrosse

**IMS Stem Lab**



**IMS Math Matters**



**IMS Science Olympiad**



**IMS Orchestra**



**IMS Chess Club**



• Congratulations to the top three winners in the Science Fair competing with Expeditionary Learning projects.

**1st: "Garden Designs"**

By Mrs. Moore's classes

**2nd: "Destinations and Diseases - The Zika Virus"**

By Mrs. Young's classes

**3rd: "Earthquake & Tsunami Survival Kit"**

By Mrs. Fugel's classes

• We are pleased to announce that thirty-six 8th graders have excelled academically with their performance on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and have earned the 2015-16 Junior Scholar distinction. In addition, we would like to recognize and congratulate all teachers and parents who made it possible for them to achieve this honor.

• Congratulations to the winners of the IMS Science Team who competed in the South Carolina Regional Science Olympiad competition. This meet included 20 smaller events, in which students had to build bridges, analyze data, design catapult systems, and test unknown substances. IMS students won four medals and six ribbons in various events.

• Eighth grade students had the opportunity to explore the rich diversity of New York City. In order to support the school's theme of global studies, students enjoyed exotic cuisine, visited landmark sites that promote culture and diversity, and created photo-essays that connected their experiences to the magnet theme. Students were challenged to consider how the city promotes diversity and an international perspective.



Jen Cook  
15-16 Teacher of the Year

**Student Highlights**



• The Irmo Town Council heard an update from Irmo Middle School's "Monarchs, Milkweed, and Migration" project, a mission designed to help conserve the Monarch butterfly population. The global project was developed in alignment with the school's internationally-focused magnet theme. To preserve a butterfly population now threatened with extinction, the students continue to encourage people to plant the food that would help them survive – milkweed. They asked the town to continue their partnership by planting more milkweed and posting educational signs in the town parks.



Irmo Middle  
Packed the Pantry  
By collecting over  
1,000 items

• IMS Student Government led our school in a "Pack the Pantry" food drive to replenish items for our food pantry. This work was based on our commitment to design principal of Service and Compassion. Our school believes in the "we are crew, not passengers" spirit.

• Students in the Math Matters built clocks to auction for the District Five Foundation. Students planned their projects, developed a timeline for work completion, created scale drawings, calculated and measured the number of degrees per minute on their clock, determined circumference and area of their clocks, wrote a biography about the significance of their design, and learned basic construction skills to build the clock.

• Beta Club students at IMS led a campaign to raise funds to help make wishes come true for local children with life threatening illnesses. The IMS Beta Club presented the Make-A-Wish Foundation with a total of \$400.



• Team iGrow has raised over \$2000 selling over 30 different items grown from their greenhouse project. This included a trip to the State Farmers Market, where they sold out of their tomatoes, squash, and cucumbers.



• All Social Studies classes participated in the National Geographic Geography Bee. Fifty students qualified for the semi-finals, with 10 students moving on to the final school Bee. After Ian Bates-Shurett won the school bee, he took an online qualifying exam and was invited to the state bee where the top 100 students in the state will go on to compete in the state bee and for a chance to move on to the national bee in Washington, D.C.



• Ms. Hudson's 8th grade Social Studies class held a "We the People" Reenactment of the Consti-



Allison Redick  
15-16 Support Staff of the Year

# iAM #IrmoSTRONG Celebration

*We are striving to make sure each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.*

Students are recognized each quarter for demonstrating the MOTIVATION Habit of Scholarship by reporting quickly and directly to class in order to be on time. Quarterly certificates and #IRMOSTRONG bracelets are an incentive designed to encourage students to make it on time for class. At the end of each semester students with zero tardies come together to celebrate their achievement in reaching one of our school-wide expectations at the iAM #IrmoSTRONG Tardy Celebration. Students enjoy music, snacks, hanging out with friends, and raffle prizes. At the first semester, there were nearly 450 students that were able to attend the #IrmoSTRONG Tardy Celebration.

In addition to the #IrmoSTRONG Tardy Celebration, students are rewarded for doing what is right in other ways. Teachers commend students for showing Integrity, Respect, Motivation, and Ownership in class by giving students Buzz Notes to acknowledge those who are displaying our Habits of Scholarship. Students exchange Buzz Notes to sit by a friend at lunch, sit outside during lunch, and weekly drawings for prizes from our local community partners. Weekly drawings are held every week for students who have redeemed their Buzz Notes and placed them in the appropriate grade level box to be entered into the drawing. Students are announced during the morning announcements and also recognized during their lunch time in front of their peers. Additionally, Buzz Notes make students eligible for quarterly drawings for prizes such as Tervis cups, electronic accessories, athletic equipment, and other great rewards. Irmo Middle School is proud that almost half of the student body has zero tardies to class, and this number is consistently increasing as the school year continues.



**Let's Connect:**

***Friend and follow us on the web!***

Facebook: [facebook.com/irmomiddle](https://facebook.com/irmomiddle)

Blog: [www.irmomiddle.blogspot.com](http://www.irmomiddle.blogspot.com)

Twitter: Principal Jackson: @IMS\_Principal

Twitter: IrmoMiddleSchool: @IrmoMiddle

YouTube Channel: [www.youtube.com/user/IMSYellowJackets](http://www.youtube.com/user/IMSYellowJackets)

