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**NEWS RELEASE**

**School Specialty Appoints Dr. Kymm Ballard  
as New Executive Director of Its SPARK™ Physical Education Program**

**GREENVILLE, Wis., April 23, 2015** – School Specialty, Inc. (OTCQB: SCOO) (“School Specialty” or “the Company”), a leading distributor of innovative and proprietary products, programs and services to the education marketplace, is pleased to announce today the appointment of Dr. Kymm Ballard as Executive Director of SPARK™. As the world’s most researched and field-tested physical and health education program, SPARK is a key component of School Specialty’s Physical Education offering. Dr. Ballard assumes her new role as Executive Director, following her distinguished leadership in the program as Partnership Development Specialist since 2009, and succeeds Paul Rosengard from the Company.

“I would like to congratulate Kymm on her well-deserved promotion and have every bit of confidence in her ability to continue to enhance SPARK programs and our overall growth in the Physical Education (PE) category,” stated Ed Carr, Executive Vice President and Chief Sales Officer. “Kymm has been a strong advocate for physical and health education for decades and brings tremendous operational and managerial experience that serves SPARK and School Specialty well. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Paul for his outstanding service to the program over the years. We have a strong team in place and together, are committed to building upon SPARK’s leadership position in research-based physical education and advancing our wide assortment of physical education solutions.”

Dr. Ballard’s professional experiences include more than a decade as a PE teacher and athletic director, several years as an administrator and the co-developer of North Carolina’s first high school demonstration school. She is the former PE, Athletics and Sports Medicine Consultant with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; and has drafted, advocated and promoted the Healthy Active Children Policy of the NC State Board of Education and the state’s Essential Standards for Physical Education. Dr. Ballard also supported the North Carolina Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Dance, and Sport Management (NCAAHPERD-SM) to retool the physical education teachers with SPARK statewide training the trainer model, more currently known as “IsPod” (In School Prevention of Diabetes). In providing guidance to schools and other national organizations to help secure resources for quality PE programs, she served as the President of the Society of State Directors for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, as well as the Chair for the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) Public Relations Committee, among other committees. In addition, Dr. Ballard currently serves as the Coordinator of Health and Physical Education at Campbell University. In her Partnership Development role at SPARK, she has also been successful in helping to initiate and facilitate millions of dollars to schools to address obesity prevention.

Among the many awards that Dr. Ballard has received are the National P.E. 4 Life Advocate of the Year award for her work in North Carolina and Washington, D.C.; the Physical Education Teacher of the Year and Health Education Teacher of the Year Awards in North Carolina; the North Carolina Coach of the Year; the highest Honor Awards from NCAAHPERD and Society of State Directors for Health, Physical Education and Recreation; the Channing Mann, National Administrator of the Year from NASPE; and lifetime

membership to the North Carolina PTA. She continues to be recognized by her industry peers, health organizations and her SPARK colleagues for her commitment to advancing physical fitness for children.

“I am honored for this opportunity to serve the SPARK program and School Specialty in an even greater capacity and will continue my focus on advancing our physical education solutions for educators and children. With the achievements that SPARK has made over the last 25 years in motivating students to engage in a lifelong love of activity and healthy lifestyle choices, I firmly believe we are well-positioned for future success. I look forward to working more closely with the team to drive advancements in quality research-based physical education in schools and organizations around the country and world – with the goal of keeping our children and communities strong and productive.”

“I couldn't be more pleased that Kymm is following in my footsteps and becoming SPARK's 2nd E.D.! Placing a physical educator at the wheel demonstrates SPARK's commitment to developing the best PE resources and doing things the right way; for kids, for teachers, and for public health. I'm excited for our worldwide SPARK family and know SPARK will be bigger and better than ever in the months and years to come,” stated Paul Rosengard.

Ms. Ballard obtained her doctorate in Education from the University of North Carolina (Greensboro) with a focus on LEP students in Physical Education. As a graduate of Appalachian State University in Physical Education and Health Education, she also holds a Master's degree in Physical Education with a focus on Sport Administration.

### **About School Specialty, Inc.**

School Specialty is a leading distributor of innovative and proprietary products, programs and services to the education marketplace. The Company designs, develops, and provides educators with the latest and very best school supplies, furniture and both curriculum and supplemental learning resources. Working in collaboration with educators, School Specialty reaches beyond the scope of textbooks to help teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators ensure that every student reaches his or her full potential. For more information about School Specialty, visit [www.schoolspecialty.com](http://www.schoolspecialty.com).

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