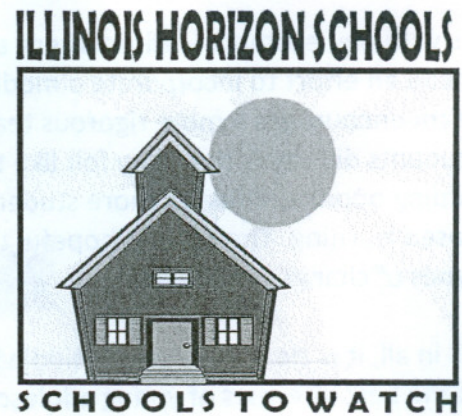


March 15, 2010

Melanie Ogle, Principal
Mayo Middle School
300 E. Wood Street
Paris, IL 61944



Dear Ms. Ogle;

On behalf of the Illinois Horizon Schools: Schools to Watch team, we wholeheartedly commend you and your staff for submitting an application and hosting our team visit on February 24, 2010. Although our time was limited, Doug Hatch, Jeremie Smith and I were tremendously inspired by our experience. Our visit to Mayo Middle School revealed even greater insight into the school's day-to-day instructional practices. This letter confirms that Mayo Middle School has been selected as an Illinois Horizon School to Watch. Congratulations!

Mayo is truly an exceptional middle grades school as it exemplifies the National Forum's vision of academic excellence, social equity, developmental responsiveness, and organizational structures and processes. Any visitor to Mayo Middle School would observe its commitment to guide all students to personal and academic success. It surrounds its young adolescents with a uniquely nurturing and developmentally-appropriate learning environment and has much to share with other middle-level educators.

Articulating and living the school's shared vision serves as an impetus to school improvement. It is highly evident that Mayo's administration and teachers have forged meaningful growth and on-going development regarding middle level principles. By unifying itself behind its dedication to middle school excellence and collegial support, it will persevere along its trajectory towards effective reform. With numerous opportunities for shared leadership, an enthusiastic and professional staff has been empowered to direct the school so it can perform to its potential. Specific structures such as the many student services and students learning about "The Mayo Way" through classroom activities and advisory service projects; they enthusiastically shared their experiences. Students' value learning within the academic realm and are challenged to embrace the opportunity to continue to be life-long learners.

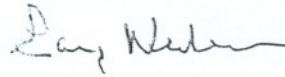
Teachers are compassionate and engage students with a variety of activities, authentic learning experiences, and clubs. Students are known and recognized, and thus, unable to "slip through the cracks" that all too often engulf young adolescents. The staff truly meets the academic, social, and emotional needs of students; our visit revealed a staff of compassionate middle school advocates and an incredibly positive ambience. As a result, students are friendly, confident, and extremely respectful; they value their educational experience as much as their school values them.

We want to thank you and your colleagues, on behalf of the Illinois Horizon School team, for the effort you expended hosting our site visit and the work you do each day within your school to accelerate middle grades reform.

Respectfully,



Deb Schrock
AIMS Executive Director
dschrock@uiuc.edu



Gary Weilbacher
Co-Director of IHSTW
gaweilb@ilstu.edu