

For Immediate Release
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Ingersoll Middle School Named Illinois Horizon School

After submitting a rigorous application and hosting site visits, two schools were selected by the Association of Middle-Level Schools (AIMS) as Illinois Horizon Schools: Schools to Watch. Ingersoll Middle School in Canton was among the award recipients. This year it joins Thurgood Marshall Middle School in Chicago as well as 54 other Schools to Watch, a nationwide school recognition project co-sponsored by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform.

According to AIMS, Illinois Horizon Schools are acclaimed for fully implementing the Forum's nationally endorsed criteria for high-performing middle schools; they seek social equity, academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, and effective organizational structures.

These Illinois Horizon Schools merit recognition for overall middle school excellence provided to all of their young adolescent learners. Visiting teams reported that Ingersoll's application and March 22nd school visit revealed visionary leadership, a positive school culture, democratic and data-driven decision making, a dedicated, knowledgeable staff, and outstanding students.

Like many Illinois middle schools, Ingersoll is challenged with the realities of budget cuts and high-stake testing. Despite these pressures, it provides its students with an exemplary educational environment. As a result students and their parents expressed that they feel recognized, understood, and supported, yet they are keenly aware of both high academic and behavior expectations.

In fact, Ingersoll students are offered many authentic learning opportunities. Classes allow students to explore their interests and grow through appropriately challenging lessons and

activities. For instance, Outward Ingersoll, a three-day outdoor educational experience for eighth graders held at the Ingersoll Boy Scout Club, involves parents and community members while offering students an unforgettable learning and team building experience.

Because of Ingersoll's strong teams and behavior programs, it has engrained good citizenship as an essential component of the school climate; both students and staff exhibit a tone of mutual respect. That same quality radiates throughout the community as Ingersoll students serve as ambassadors of kindness and compassion. Various opportunities have allowed them to share their time and talents with organizations including, St. Jude Hospital, Coats for Kids, American Red Cross, Head-Start, as well as the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

As evidence that all students are valued members of Ingersoll's learning community, it recently celebrated the opening of new wing to educate students with multiple severe disabilities. Now 24 children who live at the Renaissance Care Center in Canton will attend classes in a school that will meet all of their needs. According to principal Byron Sondgeroth, "(These children) did not have the opportunity to interact with their peers like they will now." Such strides are indicative of Ingersoll's commitment to promoting tolerance and helping others.

For these reasons, the Illinois Horizon School team, unanimously concluded in their findings, "Ingersoll Middle School students were among the most polite, well-mannered, and considerate young people with whom they have had contact. Their demeanor is a testament to the high performance of their school."

By conscientiously dedicating itself to guiding students' personal and academic success, Ingersoll guides students to authentic achievement. With its new designation as an Illinois Horizon School, it serves as a model and mentor for other schools seeking to improve, even as it continues its own efforts to provide exemplary educational programs for young adolescents. The school will host a school-wide assembly on Monday, May 16th at 8:30 A.M. to formally celebrate its recent award.

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