

LORNA BYRNE MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Dear Three Rivers School Board Members,

Second trimester is off to a great start at Lorna Byrne Middle School! We are very fortunate to have such quality people in our schools. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the great things students, staff, and the community is doing at LBMS.

We are honored to be rated an "Outstanding" school on this year's AYP school report card. This is certainly due to the dedication of our staff and students. We are continually looking at ways to improve and give our best toward our students. We have made changes to our grading system to reflect Proficiency Based Learning as well as our instructional delivery. We are also finding ways to target students who are struggling and give the additional support needed so every student has the opportunity to succeed. Four ways that we have worked to address students needing additional support is through the creation of Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO), encouraging students to attend Homework Help House prior to school starting in the morning, attending the afterschool intervention sessions taught by both classified and certified teachers, as well as creating additional classes to help students work to develop skills in areas they are deficit.

We are very proud of our ELO time as both teachers and classified have stepped up to provide instruction, supervision, and skill remediation to students. To provide you with a snap shot of what a typical week looks like with this model, students read silently during ELO time on Monday and Friday with their 3rd period teacher for 30 minutes. This time is designated to encourage students to read independently and to develop a passion for reading. Students pick the books they want to read and find appealing. These two days are tied directly into our building-wide Accelerated Reader program that all of our students are required to participate in at varying intensity levels. On a side note, our library has one of the highest circulation rates in all of the Three Rivers School District which I believe can be partially attributed to the quality and quantity of books we offer for students at Lorna Byrne Middle School. On the three remaining days of the week, Tuesday through Thursday, teachers work with students to provide additional instruction to help catch the kids up to speed with specific content skills. Some students use this time to make up proficiencies while others work to learn the skills they need in order to be successful on a make-up assessment or high stakes test. This is a great opportunity for students to get individualized help in areas they need.

In comparing the effects of our interventions on academic performance on Trimester One alone, I am pleased to announce that the number of F's and I's have been reduced drastically. In looking at the number of F's, D's, and I's earned from first trimester during the 2011-2012 school year, we are down by approximately half for the 2012-2013 school year. I believe this is a direct reflection on the work staff and students have done by participating in ELO, Homework Help House and afterschool intervention opportunities. As a school, we are very proud of this improvement and we anticipate all of the hard work will be reflected in student growth scores and meet / exceed numbers on the OAKS test.

We are also very proud of the work the Illinois River Valley Arts Council has done by stepping up and providing additional art instruction-exposure to our students throughout each trimester. Each trimester, the Illinois River Valley Arts Council has come into our social studies classes and worked with entire grade levels to do hands-on art projects that directly tie into the curriculum being taught. Examples of student art work from these amazing projects can be found hanging in our commons and in the hallways throughout the school. This is yet another indication of the great community support we receive at school. It has been exciting to witness the students engaged in learning and creating art projects directly tied to curriculum they are covering in their core classes.

Finally, I would like to note how hard we have been working on our attendance at Lorna Byrne over the past five months. Studies show that one of the largest factors that influence student achievement and graduation rates is attendance. Therefore as a school, we have put a big school focus on increasing our numbers during the 2012-2013 school year. So far, each month this year we have experienced an increase in student attendance in comparison to last year. There are a few key items that play a direct role in this improvement. Weekly attendance meetings are being held with our Family Advocate, Attendance Clerk, Dean of Students, and me. Here we talk about the students that are flying high on our radars for missing school. Sandy Madden, our Attendance Clerk, calls personally on all students that are not at school by the end of first period, in addition to the SynreVoice that goes home at the end of the day. This action has helped remind students where they need to be as many will arrive shortly at school after Madden leaves a message on the parent's phone. In addition, we have attendance initiatives that students get to participate in if they meet the attendance requirements for the month. While we do realize that life happens and various circumstances pop up, we do make exceptions for students with various reasons pertaining to their absence from school. Furthermore, as a staff we are working to create positive intentional relationships with students so they look forward to coming to school. We have coupled this with family staffings where we sit down with the student and parent to talk about the importance of school along with how we can support them. In essence, through the work of our Attendance Clerk making phone calls and tracking kids, our staff building intentional relationships, meetings with families, and attendance initiatives, we are seeing an improvement with our overall student attendance. For this, we are all very proud.

As you can see, the opportunities for learning along with the care for the students are endless at Lorna Byrne Middle School. Many of these opportunities are supported by so many volunteers and staff members that want to help make a difference for kids. It doesn't get much better than that. Thank you to all of you who continually strive to make a difference in our schools and community. Your efforts don't go unnoticed. I am thankful I work in a school that makes our kids a priority, and that is the Lorna Byrne way!

Thank you,



Rachael Huish
Principal