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To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write this nomination on behalf of the Orion Jr. High Math department. I have worked with these amazing dedicated educators for the last 3 1/2 years. Over that time I have watched this team of teachers dedicates all of their time and effort towards creating an environment where every student at Orion Jr. High is learning Math at high levels.

When I started working with them it became evident very quickly how special this group was. They have committed to each other with these beliefs as their core values: "these are not my kids but our kids," and "we are better together". This commitment to each other is evident every day they walk through the door. They look to share, support, and collaborate with each other every chance they get (before school, lunch, after school, in between classes, preps, etc.) They even spend days working collaboratively over the summer. They routinely go above and beyond with their goals, projects, or school initiatives. This is only possible because they leverage their collective whole and work together like a well-oiled machine.

Some of their accomplishments over the last 4 years have been moving their curriculum and instruction to a standards bases approach. Ensure that all students learn the intended outcomes before they are allowed to move on. They have established a process where students want to learn and know why they are learning a specific concept every day. Students know that their grade in Math represents their learning and specifically how well they have mastered the learning targets. This team has spent countless hours building curriculum and instructional practices that allow for seamless differentiation meeting the needs of all students. They have created specific assessments and collected data to inform instruction. They constantly and consistently adjust their daily instruction to meet the needs of their students based on the data they collected and analyzed.

The Math team has also expanded to include our Math Special Education Teachers as they push-in our SPED students into the regular education classrooms in a co-teaching model. These teams of teachers collaborate with others at very high levels and have created an environment where our SPED students are not only showing growth but in many cases meeting or exceeding the expectations set for all students.

Many members of this team serve as District Math Fellows and provide support and training to others throughout the district.

At the end of the day, this team loves teaching, loves students, and loves each other, and creates life-changing positive impacts on hundreds of people every day!

Sincerely,

Matthew Patterson