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WEST ELIZABETH - JEFFERSON HILLS - PLEASANT HILLS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**PLEASANT HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED AND RE-DESIGNATED AS A  
PENNSYLVANIA DONALD EICHHORN “SCHOOL TO WATCH”**

**Pleasant Hills, PA** – Pleasant Hills Middle School (PHMS) has been re-designated as a Pennsylvania Donald Eichhorn “School to Watch” as part of a recognition program developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. The Schools to Watch program recognizes schools achieving academic excellence based on rigorous criteria established by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. PHMS was initially designated as a School to Watch in 2014.

PHMS will be recognized at the Pennsylvania Association for Middle Level Education State Conference at the Penn Stater Conference Center in State College on February 25, 2018 and recognized nationally with all the other recognized STW schools across the country in Washington, DC at the National Forum’s National Schools to Watch Conference on June 28-30, 2018.

It is the policy of the West Jefferson Hills School District to not discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, age, race, color, and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 5094 and Title VI. For information regarding services, activities, programs, and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons or about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Director of Human Resources at 412-655-8450 x2226.

The Schools to Watch selection process is based on a written application that required schools to show how they met criteria developed by the National Forum. Schools that appeared to meet the criteria were then visited by state teams which observed classrooms, interviewed administrators, teachers, students, and parents, and looked at achievement data, suspension rates, quality of lessons, and student work. Schools are recognized for a three-year period, and at the end of three years, they must demonstrate progress on specific goals in order to be re-designated. Unlike the Blue Ribbon Recognition program, “Schools to Watch” requires schools to identify strengths and focus on areas for continuous improvement; thus the three-year re-designation.

**Recognized for Re-designation this year as “Schools to Watch” are four schools initially recognized three years ago:**

Central Valley Middle School, Monaca, PA

Kane Area Middle School, Kane, PA

North Hills Middle School, Pittsburgh, PA

Pleasant Hills Middle School, Pittsburgh, PA

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*More about Schools to Watch*

Launched in 1999, Schools to Watch began as a national program to identify middle-grades schools across the country that were meeting or exceeding 37 researched-based criteria developed by the National Forum. The Forum developed a web site (<http://middlegradesforum.org>) that features online tours of schools and detailed information about the selection criteria used in the recognition program. There are now 18 states which have trained Schools to Watch State Teams, with more than 450 schools recognized across the country.