Middle school reform effort comes to Indiana
Three schools selected for national ‘Schools to Watch’ recognition

Three high-performing Indiana middle schools are the state’s first to be recognized in a national initiative to boost student achievement in the crucial years of early adolescence.

Schools to Watch was launched in 1999 by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, with the goal of identifying schools that meet specific quality criteria so that their successful practices can be replicated elsewhere. Indiana is now the 18th state to participate, under the leadership of the Indiana Middle Level Education Association and the University of Indianapolis’ Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning.

Indiana’s first Schools to Watch, selected after a statewide call for applications, are:
- Taft Middle School, Crown Point
- Decatur Middle School, Indianapolis
- Triton Central Middle School, Fairland

To achieve the Schools to Watch designation, a school must demonstrate academic excellence, with high expectations that challenge students; responsiveness to the unique developmental issues of early adolescence; and social equity, with fair and democratic policies that support every student. The program also promotes the organizational norms and structures that enable a school to meet the other criteria, such as leadership, accountability and a shared vision for improvement.

"The next steps for these schools will include recognition by the state Department of Education, mentoring other middle schools who want to pursue this designation, and serving as model sites for other middle schools to visit and learn from," said Lynn Lupold, a fellow at UIndy’s CELL.

“We’ve worked for three years to bring this program to Indiana,” said IMLEA Executive Director Shirley Wright. “Schools to Watch gives us another tool in our mission to support middle schools.”

For more information, visit www.schoolstowatch.org or contact Shirley Wright at (317) 894-2937.

About IMLEA and CELL
The Indiana Middle Level Education Association is Indiana’s largest organization focusing on the needs of early adolescents and middle level educators, supporting educational improvement through its publications, events, online resources and technology-based services. More information is available at www.imlea.org.

The Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning was founded at the University of Indianapolis to collaborate with schools, communities, businesses and policymakers in transforming education, improving student achievement and strengthening quality of life and economic development throughout Indiana. More information is available at cell.uindy.edu.