

January 19, 2024

Dear Mr. Rebello,

It is with great enthusiasm that we submit our nomination for Mrs. Bethany Coughlin as RIASP's Secondary Principal of the Year Award. Mrs. Coughlin has been the principal of North Cumberland Middle School (NCMS) in Cumberland, RI for the last twelve years. In that time, she has transformed the school with her dynamic leadership and laser focus on teaching and learning and student achievement. Mrs. Coughlin has worked tirelessly to build an educational community focused on standards-based teaching and learning that is driven by using data to make educational decisions.

To begin, Mrs. Coughlin maintains a positive learning environment that holds high expectations for all learners. At the start of each day, she reminds students that her expectations are that they are active participants in their learning, that they follow all school expectations so that they can optimize their learning opportunities and to be kind and respectful to all members of the school community. Students understand that NCMS is a place where their education is important and prioritized by all stakeholders in our school community. Mrs. Coughlin believes all students can learn and sets high expectations for her staff, as she motivates her teachers to set high expectations for themselves and their students. In fact, her weekly "Monday Morning Memo" to the faculty begins with the following every week:

NCMS Focuses on:

- *Moving students to proficiency or beyond in grade-level standards.
- *Supporting students in their learning
- *Increasing student engagement and connection to NCMS

How will we do this:

- ☑ Plan and implement sound, rigorous, and focused lessons that are aligned to grade-level learning targets.
- ☑ Build relationships with students.
- ☑ Accurately measure your instructional impact using quality assessments/rubrics, analyze data to identify patterns or individual needs, and respond accordingly in a timely manner.
- ☑ Continuously improve curriculum using data/resources from student work to guide our decision-making.
- ☑ Use every instructional minute as an opportunity to actively facilitate student learning.
- ☑ Communicate with stakeholders: Essentials teachers, Special Educators, Mental Health Supporting.

These are not simply words on a page. Mrs. Coughlin lives this vision each and every day.

Mrs. Coughlin maintains an "open door" policy and encourages faculty and staff to come to her with questions about students. She actively listens, asks clarifying questions and then shares her perspective, advice, and support. She uses multiple data sources to understand the strengths and needs of each student and how to best support them. She created an NCMS Student Data spreadsheet that is available for all faculty and staff to use to plan their instruction and immediately target students who show a decrease in proficiency. Mrs. Coughlin's knowledge and expertise is phenomenal - the school's success is a direct result of the incredible dedication and devotion to moving our school forward.

Under Ms. Coughlin's leadership, NCMS has been transformed into a collaborative learning community for both teachers and students. She has a deep passion for improving student learning by encouraging and leading her staff to implement evidence-based strategies, set high expectations, and to use data to drive instruction. The results of her amazing leadership is evident in the students' academic achievements. In fact, under her leadership, NCMS has made unbelievable gains towards excellence. Over the last few years, NCMS has continuously been ranked among one of the top middle schools in the state as indicated through RIDE accountability measures. This is exceptional because many schools across the state with similar demographics

do not share our same successes in student learning achievement. Mrs. Coughlin works collaboratively with all stakeholders to create a shared vision for the school and to create a school a community that all stakeholders are proud of. Leading a large middle school is a massive undertaking, but leading a large middle school to become one of the top five middle schools in the state is a remarkable task that happens because of solid leadership, dedication and vision.

Mrs. Coughlin is passionate about providing every student with a rich, rigorous, and meaningful curriculum. Over the last few years, she has worked endlessly with district leadership, curriculum coordinators and the faculty in each core academic department to lead the vertical and horizontal alignment at each grade level in curriculum, instruction, and assessments. During meetings, she has a collaborative approach that builds the capacity of her faculty to teach , lead and collaborate. Mrs. Coughlin offers her expertise and views, but always values and listens to the teachers' expertise, as well. Her decisions to drive teaching and learning forward are always deeply rooted in evidence-based data and standards. Mrs. Coughlin is passionate about using student data to make informed decisions about curriculum and the learning community. As an example, during the 2021-2022 school-year, NCMS dropped from a 5 Star school to a 4 Star school due to achievement scores in RICAS Math. Proactively, Mrs. Coughlin created a schoolwide goal to support the math instruction at each grade level in the building. She dedicated hours with curriculum coordinators, teachers, students, and district leaders pouring over data to support improved instruction and targeted student growth in mathematics. At each faculty meeting, she reminded all stakeholders of the schoolwide goal while providing the insight and progress the team had been making. She constantly highlighted the dedication of the math teachers in our building, provided daily support for teachers, and kept student success at the forefront of all decisions. As a result, NCMS returned their 5 star status for the 2022-2023 school year. She is goal oriented, with a clear vision to grow every student, every year, at NCMS.

One of the most admirable qualities about Mrs. Coughlin is her inspiration to so many as a role model of a woman in a leadership position. As a leader, Mrs. Coughlin teaches important lessons about being confident in your decisions, making voices heard, and advocating for yourself and others. Each of us has grown as a woman in leadership because of the invaluable lessons she's taught us simply by being herself. She shows up every day with grit, determination, and unmatched dedication, motivating each person she meets to do better. Her leadership inspires others to exemplify the same qualities she upholds staff and students alike.

In closing, Mrs. Coughlin is so deserving of this prestigious honor. She is an outstanding leader who puts students and their learning first every single day. She is a caring, hardworking, and focused educational leader who holds all stakeholders to the highest expectations and standards. She is inspirational to all those who are lucky enough to work alongside her: well respected, insightful, dedicated, and a driven change-maker. Please let us know if you need any further information or have any questions.

Respectfully,

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