Section 1

A Letter from Gary Higham

August 2018

Dear Professional Development Schools (PDS) Mentor,

On behalf of the Professional Development Schools secondary team, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in our program as a mentor teacher for the Fall 2018-Spring 2019 school year. In addition to the amazing work you do in your classroom and school, you have now chosen to mentor a pre-service student teacher candidate as he or she begin the final steps to entering our great profession as an educator. The PDS program would not exist without your willingness to share your knowledge and skill with our PDS interns as they continue to prepare to be a first-year teacher and transition from Illinois State University into their teaching career.

Our Illinois State University Secondary Professional Development Schools (PDS) program continues to build great partnerships between our local school districts and ISU’s secondary education departments. Our PDS interns will soon begin a year-long journey with you to discover who they are as beginning teachers with the help of your department and school staff. They will immerse themselves in your school culture, becoming familiar with your students, faculty, parents, and community. Over the course of the next year, our students will be able to learn from watching, working, and co-teaching with you fill the role of both a mentor and colleague.

The goal of this experience is to foster the sharing of ideas, teaching pedagogy, and “tricks of the trade” between our PDS intern and you as mentor teacher.

Our hope here at Illinois State University is that this shared partnership and growth via the PDS experience will allow for rich conversations, active engagements, and continued learning for all interns/mentors involved. The time, energy, and commitment you offer our PDS interns is an invaluable part of the process, and we here at Illinois State University cannot thank you enough!

Due to your mentorship, our secondary PDS interns are eager to learn in classrooms and schools they can call their own. If you have any questions, comments, or thoughts regarding the continued improvement of the Professional Development Schools Program, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you and have a great start to the year,

Gary Higham

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