



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Lesley Range-Stanton, Director for Communications  
(o) 469.752.8094 | (m) 469.360.7552  
[lesley.range-stanton@pisd.edu](mailto:lesley.range-stanton@pisd.edu)

### **Two Exceptional Plano ISD Middle Schools Named to “Schools to Watch” List**

**PLANO, Texas, Jan. 30, 2014**— Two Plano ISD middle schools, Bowman Middle School and Murphy Middle School, were named “Schools to Watch” as part of a recognition program developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Eight Texas middle schools in total were on the list.

In 2011 Texas became the 16th state to partner with the program when the Texas Middle School Association (TMSA) became the sponsoring organization of the Texas Schools to Watch® (<http://www.texaschoolstowatch.com>) program.

Each school was selected for its academic excellence, its responsiveness to the needs and interests of young adolescents and its commitment to helping all students achieve at high levels. In addition, each school has a commitment to assessment and accountability to bring about continuous improvement, strong leadership and teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction.

“This is an amazing accomplishment for our teachers, staff, students and our school community. We look forward to maintaining and exceeding the high standards that we hold dear at our school,” said Dr. Brant Perry, principal of Murphy Middle School.

Cecil Floyd, State Director, Texas Schools to Watch said, “These schools demonstrate that high-performing middle grades schools have a clear focus on academic growth and achievement. They also recognize the importance of meeting the needs of all of their students and ensuring that each and every child has access to a rigorous, high-quality education. The state of Texas is proud to have these schools serve as models from which others can learn.”

Selection is based on a written application that required schools to show how they met criteria developed by the Forum. Schools that appeared to meet the criteria were then visited by state teams who 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 must repeat the process in order to be re-designated. The schools vary in size from several hundred to several thousand students and represent urban, suburban and rural communities.

“It is an honor and a privilege to be a Texas School to Watch!” said Gloria Martinez, principal at Bowman Middle School. “The Bowman community has truly come to together to achieve this high standard. It truly did take a village and we are thrilled to know that our kids are performing and participating with these high expectations. Our campus community looks forward to continuing this path of success in the years to come. Go Raiders!”

Launched in 1999, Schools to Watch ([www.texaschoolstowatch.com](http://www.texaschoolstowatch.com)) began as a national program to identify middle-grades schools across the country that were meeting or exceeding 37 criteria developed by the Forum. In 2002, the Forum began working with states to replicate the Schools to Watch program as a way to introduce the Forum's criteria for high-performance and identify middle grades schools that meet or exceed that criteria.

The 2014 Texas Schools to Watch® campuses are:

Bailey Middle School, Spring ISD  
Beckendorff Junior High, Katy ISD  
Beverly Hills Intermediate School, Pasadena ISD  
Bowman Middle School, Plano ISD  
Gorgycki Middle School, Austin ISD  
Hudson Bend Middle School, Lake Travis ISD  
Murphy Middle School, Plano ISD  
Simon Middle School, Hays CISD

#### ***About Texas Middle School Association***

For 39 years, the Texas Middle School Association (<http://www.tmsanet.org>) has been the premiere association for young adolescents in the state of Texas. Envisioning all middle level students as fulfilled, productive and healthy citizens of their communities and of a global society, TMSA is dedicated to implementing student-centered programs and highly effective practices for young adolescents.

#### ***About Plano Independent School District***

The Plano Independent School District (Plano ISD) ([www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu)) endeavors to foster the highest level of student learning. The mission of Plano ISD is to provide an excellent education for all students. Plano ISD is located 20 miles north of Dallas, Texas and serves the residents of approximately 100 square miles in southwest Collin County, including 66 square miles in the city of Plano, northern portions of the cities of Dallas and Richardson and parts of the cities of Allen, Parker and Murphy. Plano ISD employs 7,000 faculty and staff members who serve more than 55,000 students in 70 schools and 11 service facilities. Participating in Plano ISD schools enables students to adapt to new learning opportunities throughout their lives, collaborate with, and contribute to, the global community and to be creative and disciplined in their thinking.

###