



**Indiana
Department of Education**

Glenda Ritz, NBCT
Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction

8/5/2016

Dear Mr. Wielgus,

You have been recognized by the Indiana Department of Education for your success in Making it Happen. The Promising Practices: Making it Happen initiative celebrates and recognizes schools across the state of Indiana for their effective implementation of innovative and/or inclusive educational practices.

To help celebrate Indiana's bicentennial, the Indiana Department of Education will recognize 200 promising practices for 200 years of Statehood. By highlighting these practices an opportunity for educators to network with one another will be created – allowing educators to learn about best practices that are taking place throughout our great state and providing connections with the schools in which these practices are occurring.

Multiple divisions within the IDOE Center for School Improvement have participated in the identification process. Schools have been identified through a collaborative process using a common recognition tool to ensure each practice meets specific criteria. In addition to the included certificate the department will acknowledge all promising practice schools through multiple sources of communication to the public.

Congratulations on this recognition and thank you for *Making it Happen* for our students!

Sincerely,



Teresa A. Brown

Assistant Superintendent for School Improvement

In-School Therapy for Students



Meister and Evans Elementary Schools are Making it Happen!



WE ARE two Elementary Schools in the River Forest Community School Corporation. Our school and district strive for academic excellence. Both schools have been graded as A's several times. Several years ago our district saw the need for in school therapy for individuals, groups, and families in our schools. Our district formed a partnership with Innovations in Learning in Merrillville to provide these services directly to our community.

OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES 74.4% of our families in the RFCSC are on free/reduced lunch. Enrollments of Hispanic and White populations are nearly equal at around 44% each with Black and Multi-Racial rounding out the next 11%.

OUR TEACHERS have all had group trainings during Professional Development times.

IN OUR OWN WORDS At River Forest we have an in-school therapy program that provides individual, group, and family counseling services to students within the school setting. In addition, the therapist's provide school wide character development programs, peer mediation, staff, and parent trainings. We have seen a significant reduction in our bully interventions due to our program with Innovations in Learning. Our schools have set up a stated Bully Protocol along with our CPI Crisis Teams.

OUR PROMISING PRACTICE The In-School Therapy Program plays an integral role in the daily activities of the school including the Response to Intervention team. They assist the teachers in addressing behavioral concerns to help students be more effective in their learning environment. Objective and measurable goals are set by Innovations in Learning. This is accomplished by our In-School Program Therapists. This allows close monitoring of the treatment efficacy with our students. We also include caring for the community as part of our program as well with Character Development, Disability Awareness, Red Ribbon Week, Angel Tree, and Shop with a Cop, Thanksgiving/Christmas Food Baskets, and Coats for Kids Clothing Vouchers.

OUR STEPS to continue this program are vitally connected to the support our district, board, and Innovations in Learning have continually nurtured in making this partnership happen with fiscal integrity and feasibility. The goal is to provide high quality services to all of the community stakeholders and to help improve the quality of life of the students that we serve.

For more information about our school or corporation, email: Andrew Wielgus, Principal awielgus@rfcsc.k12.in.us or Kevin Trezak, Principal ktrezak@rfcsc.k12.in.us
Or visit our websites: www.rfcsc.k12.in.us