

**NORTHERN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
340 ROOKWOOD PARKWAY
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40505
(859) 381-3541**

October 21, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

Northern Elementary School adopted Literacy First (Professional Development Institute) as our model for changing and improving our school-wide reading program in 1999. At that time, Northern was one of the lowest performing elementary schools in Fayette County, Kentucky out of a total of 35 elementary schools. Our school wide reading score was only 15% of all students reading on or above grade level at the end of the year in May of 1999 based on a nationally normed reading test, the Scholastic Reading Inventory and/or the Gates-McGinny reading inventory.

As of May 2004, we have 89% of all students reading on or above grade level. Our state assessment, the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) reading index has increased from a low of 67.3 to 80.1 in spring of 2004. Even more significant though is the fact that in the 2004 reading content assessment, there is no gap between high poverty students and the rest of our population! Since we are predominately a high poverty school, this is a significant matter.

We attribute our outstanding reading scores, as well as the other initiatives at our school to the model of professional development designed and implemented by Professional Development Institute, Literacy First. The entire program is based on thorough research, the most recent findings on effective professional development, a commitment to improving schools through leadership trainings and the dedicated consultants who provide the intense trainings and follow-up in our schools.

It is a privilege to wholeheartedly endorse the Literacy First Professional Development Institute as one of the most well researched and effective change and school improvement models I have ever reviewed and implemented. I am now constantly taking visitors through our school, speaking at conferences and presenting to the leadership in Kentucky and I sincerely state the reason for our incredible success at Northern is because of the implementation of Literacy First.

Sincerely,

Peggy Petrilli, Principal