



Hollis Innovation Academy
225 James P. Brawley Drive NW • Atlanta, GA 30314

May 25, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am honored to have an opportunity to discuss the phenomenal, servant, instructional leader Dr. Diamond (Jack) Ford. Dr. Ford is an instructional leader who supports her teachers through her razor sharp focus on the school's improvement goals of writing, 40% Student Growth Percentiles, student work demonstrating complexity, craftsmanship in STEM, writing, math, constructed response, and expeditions. Intense professional development is conducted to ensure our instructional goals are met, and to ensure that the entire staff has the tools needed to be successful in the classroom.

During the professional development sessions, Dr. Ford and our school's instructional leaders modeled the expectations of our school. Every professional learning meeting begins with a CREW activity. The instructional team uses data and anchor charts to explain instructional concepts. As a new teacher to Michael R. Hollis Innovation Academy, I was immersed into the Hollis Crew through a New Teacher Orientation facilitated by Dr. Ford and the instructional team. The meaning of CREW and the EL instructional practices were explained, and are continuously modeled by our school leader.

Dr. Ford also focuses on building the capacity of teachers. Though we have instructional leaders and assistant principals, Dr. Ford takes the time out of her rigorous day to provide personal feedback to her staff. Throughout the school year, Dr. Ford has conducted ongoing assessments of teaching and learning. Immediate feedback is provided after all of her assessments. Recommendations and feedback are provided to build teacher capacity, and to create a more solid foundation.

Lastly, Dr. Ford supports her staff professionally. Bi-weekly, we have professional development as a grade level. We also have after school professional learning called the "Strategy Cafe." The Strategy Café sessions are differentiated to enable staff members to determine which sessions they would like to attend. I also expressed my professional and career goals to Dr. Ford. Without hesitation, she has supported my professional development. She has provided advice, written recommendation letters, and is always accessible to her staff. I am honored to be her employee, and look forward to learning more from her for years to come.

Natasha B. Lyles, PhD
7th Grade Teacher