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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CABOT MIDDLE SCHOOL SOUTH NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED**  
School Leaders from Cabot Middle School South Travel to Nation's Capitol

Cabot, AR -- Sharing first-hand knowledge of how to create and sustain a successful middle school, staff from Cabot Middle School South presented best practices to educators from middle schools across the country. CMSS is nationally recognized as a School to Watch® through the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

Principal Georgia Chastain, Asst. Principal Mike Nash, Asst. Principal Meredith Jones, teachers Stephanie Collins, Jennifer Jensen, Edward Meharg, Laura Hicks, Carrie Lair and Kelly Monroe traveled to Washington, D.C., June 25-27 to participate in the Schools to Watch® conference and shared real-world success stories, strategies and information about successfully raising student achievement and supporting positive student development in the middle grades. Sessions featured research-based practices from Schools to Watch® sites; current strategies on effective practices to raise student achievement; tips for creating supportive cultures; and suggestions for advocating for young adolescents.

"I'm very proud of our faculty and staff at Cabot Middle School South. It takes an excellent team to become a School to Watch. Everyone, including our superintendent and central office staff, community, parents and students has contributed to our success," stated Principal Chastain.

The conference provided Chastain, Nash, Jones, Collins, Jensen, Meharg, Hicks, Lair and Monroe not only with an excellent opportunity to learn from and network with their peers, but also to bring their first-hand knowledge to Capitol Hill to discuss best practices legislation, *Success in the Middle*, which is focused on improving low performing middle schools. Our Cabot Middle School South leaders highlighted the primary purpose of the bill which is to target resources to the lowest performing middle grades schools in a state to help ensure that *all* students exit the middle grades prepared for success in a high school with an academically rigorous curriculum that prepares students for post secondary education and the workplace.

"I applaud the work of the talented educators recognized by the Schools to Watch® program who work tirelessly to provide an environment for their students where they will not only succeed academically, but

also prepares them for success in high school and beyond,” stated Deborah Kasak, executive director, National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. “*Success in the Middle* presents a tremendous opportunity to improve middle grades schools across the country and it is my hope that policymakers will listen to the experiences and knowledge of those in the schools who are succeeding at reaching and making a difference in the lives of adolescents.”

The Schools to Watch® program identifies and honors schools nationally so all might learn how to achieve academic success through best practices for all young adolescents. Schools identified as Schools to Watch® initiative are academically excellent – challenging all students to use their minds well; developmentally responsive – sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence; and socially equitable – democratic and fair, providing every student with high-quality teachers, resources, and supports. In order to achieve this level of performance, high-performing schools establish norms, structures, and organizational arrangements to support and sustain their trajectory toward excellence. They have a sense of purpose that drives every facet of practice and decision-making.

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The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform is an alliance of over 45 educators, researchers, national associations, and officers of professional organizations and foundations committed to promoting the academic performance and healthy development of young adolescents. To learn more, visit [www.middlegradesforum.org](http://www.middlegradesforum.org).

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