



Burns Elementary Middle School
14350 Terry Street Detroit, Michigan 48227 Ph. 313 852-0534
Cynthia Clayton, Principal Stacey Daniels, Assistant Principal
#BandedTogether



January 13, 2021

Dear MACUL Innovative District Award Committee:

We are writing to support Detroit Public School Community District's (DPSCD) application for the Innovative District award.

As Master Teachers at Burns Elementary, we pride ourselves on our school community. Even before Covid hit, we did a good job of connecting with our parents and had a great parent community and networking system. However, when Covid unexpectedly hit, we realized we had a big gap in technology. Even though a lot of our students are digital natives and tech savvy, they weren't academically tech savvy.

We knew that our students needed devices, so we supported the Connected Futures device deployment where we distributed a device to every student at Burns. That was one major barrier to student engagement that we tackled. Additionally, although we had many students return for in-person learning, we knew that at any point, schools should be shut down again for in-person learning, and we wanted our face-to-face students to be ready. We had all students, regardless of whether they were enrolled for online or face-to-face learning, bring their devices to school every day. We taught all students how to use Clever and Teams and how to upload their assignments. And we're grateful we did because in November 2020, face-to-face learning was once again suspended, but Burns' students are ready.

Our teachers are ready, too. Our school's technology coordinators did a great job of supporting teachers who were learning new apps and how to teach online. We research other apps to support student engagement, such as Nearpod. We are talking about technology best practices – new ways to check for student understanding and present our work.

By getting the devices in the hands of each student and equipping students and their parents with technology training and support, the District has worked to minimize barriers to success in this new environment. We fully support the efforts of the District as they seek this award. Through the implementation of Connected Futures and the resource hubs, the District has allowed the community of students, parents, and staff to stay connected during a time when social and



physical isolation is at an all-time high. For that reason, the District shines and deserves this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simone Brown", is written over a horizontal blue line.

Simone Brown (Jan 14, 2021 17:58 EST)

Simone Brown
Middle School Math Master Teacher
Burns Elementary-Middle School
Detroit Public Schools Community District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mysti Clanagan", is written over a horizontal blue line.

Mysti Clanagan (Jan 14, 2021 21:58 EST)

Mysti Clanagan
Elementary Math Master Teacher
Burns Elementary-Middle School
Detroit Public Schools Community District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tawana Jordan", is written over a horizontal blue line.

Tawana Jordan (Jan 14, 2021 23:00 EST)

Tawana Jordan
Elementary ELA Master Teacher
Burns Elementary-Middle School
Detroit Public Schools Community District

