Megan is an exemplary teacher in her second year at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, and has already had a major positive impact on her colleagues, her students, and the institution in her short time here. In the sophomore biology course, she has helped to evaluate curriculum and create and institute a plan in place for "at risk" students. The plan was innovative in that it was explicit in asking students to engage in metacognition and reflect on their learning and progress. Megan worked with the students one-on-one outside of class to help them with their explanations, practice problems, questions, and preparation for quizzes. Megan presented this successful model with another colleague to the school faculty.

Megan's relationship with the students is noteworthy in that students respect her yet they also feel very comfortable with her. They freely ask questions, and have been very appreciative of the time she is willing to take to work with them, both in and out of class, so that they can be more successful. This year she was an advocate for one struggling student, and worked regularly with her on organizing, talking to her teachers, balancing her work load, and basically giving any support she needed. Informally, many students came to her for advice and to discuss non-academic areas of their life.

Megan has volunteered her time outside of the classroom to work with 9 students this year on various research and independent study projects. Their projects have included the expression of E-cadherin on invasive breast cell cancer cell lines, the role of probiotics in digestion, a study of endemic diseases in third world countries, and the effect of silver nitrate treatment on bioremediation, among other topics.

Megan has developed curriculum such as a real-world lab on antibiotic resistance, activities to help students explore careers in biology, and new forms of assessment that help focus students to explain the most important concepts clearly and concisely. She is currently helping to develop two new courses, one in virology and another in cell biology. She also helped another teacher in the initial development of a biophysics course. Megan has shared her professional expertise by presenting teaching workshops on microbiological topics at professional development institutes and teaching summer science enrichment programs for junior high students.

Megan is a great candidate for the new teacher award because she has had such a positive influence on her colleagues, her students, our academy, and beyond in such a short period of time. We appreciate your consideration.