



Wissahickon High School

521 Houston Road, Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002-3599

(215)619-8112

Fax (215) 619-8113

Subject: Letter of Recommendation

To Whom It May Concern:

Not only is Alex Dyer a dedicated, caring and dynamic educator, but she is also a hard-working and pleasant young woman. I have had the pleasure of both having Alex as a student, as well as working with Alex, as a staff developer, for the past year. Over the years I have had seen firsthand Alex's growth and maturity from a student to a professional, and I can very definitively say that she has been an enormous asset to our district in her long term substitute teaching role this year.

From the moment Alex took over the 11th and 12th grade courses for the Spring term, she dove right into planning and preparing for success. She set up regular meetings with our staff development office and worked to build lessons that followed the Before-During-After learning format, reflected various structures and methods of engaging students, and embedded the PA Common Core Standards for ELA and Reading/Writing in Social Studies, content area literacy strategies and the use of technology, when appropriate, in support of learning in the Social Studies classroom.


I was impressed by Alex's flexibility and willingness to try certain lessons and strategies that were new and considered instructional best practice. One specific example was her use of a *Cognitive Journaling Activity* in which she facilitated a lesson to help introduce her students to the Cuban Missile Crisis. She incorporated the PA Common Core Standards and a writing to learn literacy strategy to help students read and understand a non-fiction article, as well as become metacognitive learners-as part of the lesson asked them to reflect on their own thought processes while reading. The lesson was a mix of individual, pair, small group and whole class activities and was very student centered. For this particular lesson, I worked very closely with Alex in terms of co-planning it, modeling it, co-teaching it with her, and then providing feedback while I watched her facilitating it on her own.

Along with being a hard worker and being open to challenging herself, she is a quick learner. During our debrief Alex was very quick to pick up on what went well in the previous lesson and what areas could be improved for the future. It did not take long for her to tackle another literacy based strategy to support her students in the reading of non-fiction. While Alex and I co-planned a lesson using the *Backwards Paragraph* strategy to help her students develop thesis statements and blueprints that would eventually drive an inquiry based research project, she felt confident and comfortable enough to try out the lesson on her own, without any assistance. As a good reflective practitioner does, she did meet to discuss how things went with her early morning class and made all the appropriate adjustments for her late afternoon class. As was reflected in the observation report from our assistant principal, the lesson was a great success.

Outside of her willingness to immediately work on her planning and instruction, Alex has shown great maturity and a real skill in dealing with her students. Coming in and taking over half way through the year, she walked into a tough situation. Alex was looking to simultaneously form a relationship with her students, and at the same time change up some of the ways in which the students had been taught to reflect a more rigorous, student centered approach. While she met with some resistance at first, Alex stayed the course and as the semester progressed she managed to be successful in both endeavors.

Overall Alex has showed a real commitment to teaching, to developing a growth mindset, and to making her classroom and the school community a better place for students. It is with great enthusiasm that I recommend Alex Dyer for a teaching position in your district! While our district will miss her talents, she will be an asset to any district that is lucky enough to hire her.

Sincerely,



Anthony J. Gabriele
Instructional Staff Development Specialist
Wissahickon School District
(610) 960-1707