

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

March 24, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I highly recommend Kristen Dantonio for an elementary or middle school teaching position. As her field instructor, I oversaw Kristen while she worked as a teaching intern in the Michigan State University Elementary Education Yearlong Internship Program for the 2015 – 2016 school year. Given my observation of her teaching, I can say with confidence that Kristen graduated from this program with the teaching skills and abilities of a much more experienced educator.

Kristen is a very talented teacher, and she was able to display this talent in a highly diverse classroom – a classroom with a mix of students that challenged her long-tenured, expert Mentor Teacher. The students she worked with came almost exclusively from a traditionally urban and disadvantaged background. She embraced the chance to work with this diverse set of students and immediately began the process of forming relationships with her students and using those relationships in the service of their learning. However, Kristen added to that a drive and creativity that is rare in a teacher of her experience. Kristen noticed quickly that her students were motivated by hands on, project and inquiry based learning. Even though many new teachers would have shied away from bringing those experiences to a group that could be so challenging behaviorally, she was unwilling to give up on them. Her strength of will, constant positive reinforcement, and reflection allowed her to really be successful. I recently watched a lesson in which she had all of her students engaged in complex, multi-step division. She achieved this by setting clear expectations, providing appropriate support and bringing her own flair to the activity. This was just one in a long list of examples that show that she plans her lessons carefully, looking at student learning to guide her instruction, and pulling from research based teaching methods.

Additionally, she builds strong relationships with her students and their families. Then she uses those relationships in the interest of improving student learning. This is especially evident as Kristen circulates the room during student work time. She uses her knowledge of the students to push them to achieve when they need to be pushed, and support them when they need support. This expert understanding of her students means that much more time is spent on learning than on management. She is in a classroom where students can get frustrated and overwhelmed and stop working, and many times, I have watched her expertly help a student get back on track.



College of Education

Teacher Education

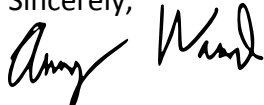
Michigan State
University
620 Farm Lane,
116 Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824

517-353-5091
Fax: 517-432-5092
education.msu.edu

In addition to her teaching qualifications, Kristen will be a highly collaborative member of your school – she has worked closely with her mentor teacher and grade level team to design instruction. She is well respected by her colleagues and is always eager to lend a hand when needed.

I believe Kristen has the knowledge and skills, to be an outstanding teacher and community member in whatever school is lucky enough to hire her. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Ward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and "W".

Amy Ward

Fixed Term Faculty

Michigan State University, College of Education, Department of Education

Erickson Hall, 620 Farm Lane, Room 303, East Lansing, MI 48824

agward@msu.edu