

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

May 15, 2014

To whom it may concern:

It is my pleasure to write this letter on behalf of Jenna Lepkowski. I was Jenna's Michigan State University field instructor for her internship year in Robin Moritz's fourth grade class at Mount Hope Elementary School in Lansing, Michigan. I visited Jenna's classroom once a week, performed multiple formal and informal observations, and led her and several other interns in a series of seminars and internship tasks throughout the school year.

Jenna is an excellent early career teacher. She is an organized, creative instructor and manager who teaches ambitiously and who is committed to high standards for both her students and herself. Watching her teach a lesson, it is easy to think she has been teaching for a number of years: her careful attention to lesson objectives, her assessment of those objectives, and her ease in front of a room as she handles technologies, materials, and transitions *while* keeping her primary focus always on her students, seem those of a teacher who is well beyond her first year. Grouping and differentiation, for example, have interested Jenna from the beginning of the year, and throughout her teaching she has striven to meet her learners at their own levels of readiness. During her math lessons, this frequently meant that Jenna's students would quickly and quietly rearrange their desks into cooperative groups, which were then given conceptually rich, rigorous differentiated inquiry tasks. In other subject areas, Jenna frequently constructed and used project-based assessments in addition to traditional paper-based and technological assessments, which allowed her to attend to, and further develop, her students' skills in context.

Since the year's start, Jenna strove to build a classroom learning community where respect and trust are paramount. Jenna is a firm, but fair manager: she unequivocally and consistently demands the attention and respect of her class, both for her and for their peers, and knows her students not only as learners, but as people. Because Jenna modeled the utmost care and respect when listening to her socioeconomically and racially diverse students, they were led to listen to each other with care and respect as well.



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In addition to nurturing and challenging her students, Jenna worked very harmoniously with her mentor teacher, regularly co-planning lessons and collaborating on units, as well as sharing and coordinating specialist (art, library and PE) instruction with the other teachers and intern on her grade level. Jenna helped run several schoolwide evening events throughout the year (holiday parties, dances) and supported the school's Math-R-Rama (district-level math competition) team. In addition to maintaining positive informal parent relationships, Jenna ran the spring parent-teacher conferences. While recovering from a torn ACL in the spring, Jenna played a pivotal role in Mount Hope's very popular fourth-grade volleyball program. Finally, Jenna also scouted and planned an academically targeted field trip for her entire grade level to a local Earth Day celebration—a trip that was a great success both logistically and academically, as well as being virtually free due to Jenna's wise employment of the city bus system.

Jenna Lepkowski is an ambitious and caring practitioner who accepts nothing less than the best from herself and her students. Her achievement is exceeded only by her potential. Any school would be very, very lucky to gain her as a member of its faculty, and any student would be even luckier to claim a place in her classroom. I recommend her heartily!

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