

April 4, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

Sarah Gerding was a student teacher in my second grade class at Wattles Elementary for twelve weeks from January – April 2014. The class consisted of 24 culturally diverse students. Over the twelve week period, Sarah gradually took over instruction of all subjects, including math, reading, writing, word study, science and social studies. She was also responsible for all parent communication and classroom management.

From the beginning of the school year, Sarah attended weekly planning meetings with the second grade team and took the lead in certain subjects by looking ahead and making the necessary plans for upcoming lessons. Sarah would spend an extended amount of time looking through units to understand the concepts that students needed to know in their entirety. She implemented lessons through careful planning, allowing time for connection building, independent work opportunities, group work and partnerships.

Sarah is a compassionate and conscientious teacher. She took the time to reflect on decisions and actions she made in the classroom and made the adjustments necessary to create a positive and collaborative environment for students. Sarah was able to step back, observe a situation and think of a creative idea to motivate students. Her maturity and confidence lets the class know they are in a safe and structured environment. She creates the climate necessary for students to take positive risks in the classroom and she sets clear expectations for both academic and social goals. Sarah has a calmness about her that allows her students to feel safe and happy in her care. Even her most shy students have gained a confidence and openness about them that has helped in both academic and social areas of their school life.

Technology was an integral part of Sarah's daily instruction. Using the SmartBoard, she would implement lessons she created herself. Sarah utilized the Ipads during Math Workshop and also utilized the online resource that was part of Troy School District's new math curriculum, ThinkCentral. Additionally, Sarah created a class website for the parent community to use. Here she included pictures, homework, spelling lists, curricular concepts, important notes and much more! Sarah received many compliments from parents about her website.

In addition to the website, Sarah has made connections with the parent community by sending weekly newsletters and communicating with parents via email, phone calls and face-to-face meetings. Sarah also attended fall conferences and led spring conferences. Many parents have complemented her on her informative interpersonal communication skills. Sarah also assisted in completing report cards. She reviewed data and helped write narratives in the different subject areas for each student.

From the first day Sarah stepped into Wattles, she began making connections with staff and students. She attended all staff meetings and has been a meaningful contributor to discussions regarding decisions for the school. She is by far one of the hardest workers at Wattles! She puts in endless hours to ensure that she has exceeded all expectations colleagues have of her.

I *highly* recommend Sarah Gerding for any teaching position that becomes available to her. Any school that is lucky enough to hire Sarah will be receiving much more than just a teacher. They will have hired an advocate for kids, a motivated adult, a collaborative colleague and a meticulous professional. It has been a pleasure to help Sarah along this journey. Her future school is a lucky place!

Sincerely,

Lindsay Long
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