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Recommendation for Aaron Stephenson

August 27, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Aaron Stephenson. I met Aaron in 2006 when I was his mentor during his first year at Worcester Academy. Aaron was already a veteran teacher at the time and quickly settled into life at the Academy, becoming Chair of the World Languages Department within a year of his arrival. Aaron was a caring and effective leader of the department, holding its members to the highest standards for implementing a real world and student-centered curriculum while also allowing department members the autonomy to establish their own classroom communities as they saw fit. Aaron was a strong decision maker and advocate for our department, yet he always favored a democratic decision-making process amongst the members which led to all feeling included in department decisions.

The theme of Aaron caring extends most importantly to his relationship with his students. Aaron is a phenomenal Spanish educator, pushing his students to communicate solely in the target language regardless of their proficiency level, and the fruits of his labors show annually in the remarkable percentage of his students who earn grades of 4 or 5 on the AP Spanish Language exam. Aaron recognizes the importance of all that the Spanish speaking world can offer his students beyond the classroom; he regularly incorporates authentic learning experiences into his practice having arranged Latin dance classes, Hispanic cuisine exploration and even coordinated and led several language immersion service-learning trips for his Spanish students to Costa Rica. Despite decades of teaching experience, Aaron continues to hone his craft through voluntary professional development; he travels annually to serve as a grader of AP Spanish Language exams during which he reflects on his own teaching practice in order to bring new ideas into his classroom for the benefit of his students.

Beyond the confines of the school building, Aaron cares deeply about the world around him. He is an environmentalist who rode his bike cross country in order to simultaneously raise funds for cancer research and carbon emissions offsets. On one of his trips, he created a vlog in Spanish chronicling his adventure that he subsequently used within one of his teaching units. Educators such as Aaron are a rare and invaluable breed, the ideal combination of "old school" and "new school." Aaron understands how to effectively reach all students and push them to achieve mastery in a foreign language while simultaneously incorporating academic technology into his practice to effortlessly and authentically connect with today's students.

I am fully confident that Aaron would mesh seamlessly with your faculty and have an immediate, positive and lasting impact on the students at your school. If you have any questions regarding Aaron's candidacy for your institution, please do not hesitate to contact me via email (adam.strogoff@gmail.com) or cell phone (860-874-5741).

Sincerely,

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