



Letter of Recommendation – Karina Olsen

To Whom It May Concern:

I have had the opportunity to work with and observe Karina, a sixth grade apprentice teacher, over the course of the past two years. Karina appreciated the opportunity to take advantage of the second year that our apprentice program affords in order to gain additional experience with Middle School students and to work alongside a lead teacher with a different style. This has been an important process for her as she continues to hone her craft of teaching; her own understanding of child development and differentiation has also been enhanced. She has been a positive presence in the Middle School, working well with her lead teachers as well as other colleagues and connecting well with students.

In terms of preparation, Karina came up with thoughtful lessons for her students in English, history, and math. As part of a classroom that piloted Writer's Workshop, she worked to develop reading lessons that connected back to the teaching points in the writing units. She incorporated varied resources and materials to deliver her lessons, and provided opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking. Also, she found great success in teaching math. She took a careful approach to all she did and created activities that were relevant. Leading literature groups, working with leveled groups in math, grading student work, and helping with narrative reports, Karina has been actively involved in all aspects of the Grade 6 program.

Patient and uplifting, Karina works very well with learners in a one-on-one and small group capacity. In these moments when students may need some additional support, Karina reviews, reteaches and/or reinforces a concept, approaching it from multiple angles, until they have gained understanding and clarity. In these interactions as well as when working with the whole class, a growth mindset is always encouraged by her.

More important than Karina's ability to present the material, however, is her ability to know her students. Supportive and observant, Karina established an excellent rapport with the students in her classes as well as other homerooms. From sharing a quote or personal story to cultivating kindness and gratitude, Karina emphasized the importance of being positive and encouraged individuality.

Karina's enthusiasm was not only felt in the classroom, but also on the playground and in the clubs program. At recess, she could be seen drawing on her camp counselor experience to get a game going to conversing with a group of students. She was an integral part of our Grade 6 overnight trip to Nantucket; she organized and led daytime courses as well as took the lead on the evening beach walk activity. A dedicated coach of soccer and basketball, she carried her enthusiasm to the sports program as well. Karina was always working to teach skills and foster teamwork.

I recommend Karina without reservation for a teaching position. She offers the intelligence, sensitivity and commitment that are necessary in our profession. Karina has been a positive force in the Middle School these past two years, and her efforts have been greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss her attributes in more detail.

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