

April 17, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter on behalf of Joanna Hayes, whom I had the pleasure to work with in my role as Drama Teacher and Drama Club Director at the Winthrop Middle School in Winthrop, Ma. Joanna was a student teacher from Emerson College who observed and taught in my classroom during the spring of 2020. Joanna worked with students in grades 6, 7 and 8 as well as assisted with the after school drama club during our spring production. Within each grade, Joanna demonstrated an understanding of grade appropriate content and how to create lessons that were engaging and accessible to all students.]

Theatre can be an intimidating class - particularly for students who are not accustomed to or comfortable with sharing and performing for their peers. Joanna has a warm and inviting teaching style. Her supportive tone creates a classroom environment where students feel safe to try something new and make mistakes. Joanna is not afraid to share personal experiences with her students; she establishes a close connection with each student through personal anecdotes, acknowledging her own mistakes, and personally engaging in each activity at the students' level. She shares the classroom with her students, establishing a space where students can work cooperatively with her. From my observations, it is clear that students feel safe, and comfortable with Joanna, and excited about the content she is teaching.

Joanna crafted engaging lessons which utilized various teaching strategies such as; small group activities, movement based theatre games, and the integration of technology and social emotional learning skills. By providing differentiated learning experiences, Joanna made the content easily accessible to every student in the class. Furthermore, when the school had to transition to remote learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, Joanna worked collaboratively with myself and other staff to bring creative, engaging, and appropriately challenging enrichment activities to our students. Joanna also made connections with students through virtual chats, emails, and feedback on activities. I was extremely impressed with Joanna's ability to adapt during an extraordinarily challenging time.

Joanna is an extremely passionate and charismatic educator and theatre practitioner. She would be an asset to any educational or theatrical institution. As a personal note, I feel extremely fortunate to have had a chance to collaborate with Joanna and I am truly excited to see what she brings to the world of theatre education.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need additional information. I can be reached at (781) 307-6487 or by email at bdaley@winthrop.k12.ma.us

Best Regards,

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