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To Whom It May Concern:

May 1, 2016

I am writing to recommend Alyssa Farrell for employment in your school district. Currently, I serve as Alyssa's university supervisor and mentor for her student teaching placement in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Saint Anthony Park Elementary School in the Saint Paul Public School District. I am also her instructor for a Masters level seminar course where she engages in reflective practices to meet the needs of all her students. After formally observing Alyssa in all content areas, I am certain she will continue to be an excellent teacher and positive addition to a school staff.

Over the course of Alyssa's yearlong placement, I have seen her develop a variety of important strengths as an educator. Alyssa's professionalism is clear from her thoughtful communication skills and collaborative relationship with her cooperating teacher. I have observed Alyssa effectively plan and co-teach with her cooperating teacher. This is one of her greatest strengths. This blending of theory and practice is evident in their effective instruction and is highly based on student knowledge and assessment.

Across content areas, Alyssa is thoughtful in facilitating whole class and small group work by situating student learning at the center of her pedagogy. Through weekly and daily reflection, she emphasizes a caring yet firm approach to student motivation and behavior. She is an effective communicator and holds students accountable for their own learning. Alyssa is consistent in her follow-through with these expectations.

Alyssa also brings the experience of her Outdoor Recreation and Education minor to her planning and instruction. For example, Alyssa's collaborative and interdisciplinary lessons on trees drew on outdoor experiential learning, technology integration, science, and literacy to engage all of her students.

Alyssa has strong sense of positive classroom community and makes these connections visible in her relational and consistent teaching style. Drawing on culturally relevant teaching practices, Alyssa seeks to understand the lives of her students inside and outside of the classroom. Morning meetings are an example where Alyssa invites students to share meaningful aspects of their lives. She connects these experiences in her instruction where she also exhibits strong content knowledge.

This commitment to the whole student is also evident in her relationships with her students' families and communities. Alyssa seeks out opportunities to connect with families and the community through conferences, Site Council meetings, professional development, and student-centered extracurricular activities. I have observed her commitment to her teaching practice that goes beyond the traditional classroom context.

While Alyssa is already a strong teacher candidate, she is also willing to learn new resources and approaches to best meet the needs of her students. This reflective nature, along with Alyssa's ability to collaborate with others, connect with students, design thoughtful lessons, and be confident in the classroom, make her an excellent teacher. Please feel free to contact me to discuss Alyssa's many strengths as an educator.

Sincerely,

Jana LoBello

Teaching Specialist

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