

Education Department

To Whom It May Concern:

December 2013

I am writing this letter in support of Abbey Wilson's application for an elementary school teaching position.

I have known Abbey since her first weekend on the Augustana campus. She was part of my first-year advising group and I became her academic adviser once she declared elementary education as a major. During her junior year she was a peer-mentor for a subsequent first year advising group. She also was a student in three classes that I teach: *Educational Psychology & Measurement*, *Elementary Science/Heath Methods*, and *Elementary Social Studies Methods*. In addition, I supervised her student teaching in a kindergarten classroom. To say the least, I know Abbey very well, have worked with her in a variety of contexts, and have observed her growth as she has fully come into her own as a new teacher. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with her and have found her to be compassionate, conscientious, and professional as she engages with others and fulfills her responsibilities. It is without any hesitation that I provide my strongest recommendation.

Abbey was extremely well prepared for my classes. It was obvious from her questions and comments in class that she had worked hard to integrate new ideas with her previous experiences. During my classes students must work together in groups and they have that option outside of class as well. Abbey's interactions with her peers consistently helped to foster their engagement in the discussions. She also demonstrated her ability to coordinate and work with others in our year-long Number Sense Project. The project includes intensive work with a peer to design and implement activities for kindergarten students that develop those skills. As co-director of the project I met weekly with Abbey and the other students involved. I also was with her as she presented her collaborative action research project on campus and at the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics conference this fall. She and her co-researcher focused on developing the kindergartners' subitizing abilities. Her research led to the development of an app that is now available for iPad®: *Domino 10 Frame*. Abbey continued this pattern of thoughtful engagement during student teaching. Her academic preparation is excellent and her ability to work with others is also a strength.

I observed Abbey teach four lessons: math, literacy twice, and the morning "daily update." She made use of whole group activities, small groups, partners, individual, and center work. She regularly asked students "how" and "why" questions rather than just the "what" questions. She fostered student response in a variety of ways. One particularly interesting activity was the development of a matrix to organize the information students were gathering during their author study of Leo Lionni. Finally, the edTPA project Abbey created as part of our student teaching requirements provides a nice snapshot of her abilities to plan for and evaluate student work. I encourage you to ask her about it.

Abbey's interactions with her students were positive and her methods of refocusing behavior were successful. Abbey made use of a wide variety of ways to garner student attention using her voice: (chica chica boom boom, hocus pocus everybody focus, hands on top now we stop); using different tools (star chime, bell, turning off the lights); and, interjecting a change of pace (rhythms, brain breaks, stretches). During her lead teaching she demonstrated an ability to anticipate and prepare for issues that might arise, minimize distractions, and monitor the work of the whole class.

I am confident that Abbey is ready to begin her teaching career. Her post-observation and weekly reflections were thoughtful and complete. She analyzed the quality of her lessons and integrated the feedback she received from her cooperating teacher and me. I expect she will take full advantage of professional development opportunities offered by the district and that she will develop into a leader in her building.

Sincerely,



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