



November 15, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this letter on behalf of Katherine Serafini, who is just completing her student teaching experience at Northwestern Regional High School, District #7 in Winsted, Connecticut. I have acted as Katie's college supervisor from Saint Joseph College during this placement, which began on September 1 and will be completed on November 18. A graduate student at Saint Joseph College, Katie (as she is called) has done an outstanding job teaching five homogeneous English classes in tenth and twelfth grades.

I imagine that most letters of recommendation that you receive are positive, but I'd like to begin by impressing upon you the unique quality of Katie's candidacy. In my forty years as an educator, she has been one of the best student teachers with whom I have worked as a college supervisor or as a teacher. Her cooperating teacher corroborated my assessment when she said to me that Katie is one of the finest student teachers with whom she has worked and that she would hire her in a minute if a position were available in the district.

In my observations and conferences with Katie throughout her student teaching experience, I have found her to be very hard working, very creative and extremely concerned about her students' learning. She assiduously assesses each lesson, reflecting on how her teaching might improve and modifies her lessons accordingly. Her lesson plans have been well organized, well thought out and well executed. The unit she prepared for her general level tenth grade class on the novel Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson reflected her creativity and hard work. In one lesson the students were divided into groups to discuss the characters in the novel. After the initial meeting, the students switched groups to "teach" others what they had learned in their first discussions. As she prepared the groups for this activity, as well as for all others, Katie was keenly aware of the need to differentiate and to consider the needs and learning styles of all her students. In another lesson with this class, Katie engaged her students in writing poetry, as a response to Speak, about their own difficult life experiences and what they learned from them. The students also made original Cd's, collages and wrote essays on the novel. For her college bound sophomores, in a lesson on Ray Bradbury's Dandelion Wine, Katie set up four stations around the room for her students who rotated at different intervals to engage in different activities as they reflected on their understanding of the events in the novel. One station

involved a reflection on a video whose theme matched perfectly the message in the chapter; another involved writing a news article about an episode and a third required the students to create their own ads citing details from the novel. With her honors sophomore class, a particularly impressive group of students, Katie used the Harkness Method as she watched them discuss Dandelion Wine without engaging herself. Each student played a role in the discussion and all were required to participate. I was awed by the level of discussion in this class and Katie's role in the end as she facilitated a reflection with her students about the process of their own discussion. In all of her classes, I have been impressed with the high level of engagement of her students. Katie expects a great deal of them and encourages them to be responsible for their own learning, a value she wishes to emphasize throughout her teaching career.

I have also been impressed with Katie's rapport with her students. She has a natural presence in the classroom that commands respect while engendering warmth. She praises her students readily and, rather than rejecting a response, helps students to think through their answers by encouraging critical thinking. Katie has had few problems with classroom management because her students know she means business. However, she also knows how to relate to high school students in a way they appreciate and enjoy. Always empathetic and concerned for her students' learning, Katie goes out of her way to call them at home and to meet with those who are struggling and encouraging their every effort.

An intelligent, warm and self-confident young woman, Katie has an immediate rapport with all those with whom she comes into contact. She has developed a very positive and mutually respectful relationship with me, with Sarah Machowski, her cooperating teacher, as well as with the other members of the staff at Northwestern Regional High School, including the special education teacher and the paraprofessional who co-teach her general level sophomores with her. She is so eager to grow and to improve that she seeks out constructive criticism. Above all, she has high expectations of herself and is the first to find fault with her lessons.

As Katie has worked hard, challenging herself and her students over these ten weeks of student teaching, I am certain that she will continue to grow to become a master educator. I give her the highest recommendation as a teacher who will make great contributions to the profession and to any school system lucky enough to employ her.

Sincerely yours,



Renana Kadden

College Supervisor