

December 11, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to recommend Kristina Ford to you and your school for a teaching position. Ms. Ford is a remarkable young woman who would be an asset to any school's faculty. For the last two years, I have been Ms. Ford's colleague, mentor, and AP Lead Teacher. In all of those areas, I have been impressed with Ms. Ford, her pedagogy, her character, and her passion for teaching.

Ms. Ford first came to our school after her student teaching at an international school in San Antonio, Texas. Unfortunately, they did not have an open position so she was unable to translate her student teaching into full time employment. When I became aware that Ms. Ford was interested in our school, I contacted a colleague who worked with her during her student teaching. My colleague had two words for me, "Hire her!" We did.

Ms. Ford is what I consider to be a natural born teacher. She has all of the right instincts in addition to a dazzling work ethic that makes her ideas come into fruition. Her work with what I consider to be the most challenging level of high school students, freshmen, has been exemplary in all ways. Ms. Ford has high standards for both her on-level and her pre- Advanced Placement students. She is able to scaffold student work so that it becomes easy and possible for students to work up to her standards. She has an effortless ability to command both respect and admiration in her students. Her freshmen want to please her and to win her approval, resulting in them working harder for her than they do for almost all of their other teachers.

Freshmen can be hard to engage, but Ms. Ford's lessons, in particular her Project Based Learning lessons, have been very successful. Our STEM Academy depends on the ability of the teachers at the freshman level to help kids make the transition from being passive learners to becoming much more active learners who work collaboratively to solve problems or to create products in which learning objectives have been embedded. In Texas, we have never met a standardized test the state board of education didn't like. Ms. Ford has been able to do the almost impossible: she can foster student standardized test achievement all while placing the responsibility for learning firmly in the hands of the students. Out of all of the teachers within our academy, I believe Ms. Ford is the best at balancing these almost contradictory demands.

It will be difficult for our school and its students to lose Ms. Ford as she has, even in her short time with us, made a huge impact upon our student body. Our students are better prepared for the academic rigors our academy demands. Because of her, students enter the upper grades with the skills we need: collaboration, technical fluency, critical thinking, problem solving, research skills, and expanded creativity. I wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Ford to you and your school.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Barbknecht

Jennifer.barbknecht@risd.org

214-577-0743