To Whom It May Concern:

It has been a great pleasure to work with Middle School in my eighth grade English classroom. He student taught at Middle School for seven weeks. He has approximately 1,100 students, with about 43% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch. While at Middle School, he taught five sections of English 8: three standard sections, one honors section, and one English/Special Ed. co-taught section that contained a high percentage of students who had identified needs in reading and/or writing. The five class sizes ranged from 20 to 30 students. In addition, he monitored a study hall (Target) of 31 students.

, from the beginning, proved himself highly motivated. He understood from the start that relationship building is the pathway to reaching kids. Before the end of his first week, he knew the names of all 125 students. When they entered the classroom, he greeted the kids by name, with eye contact, and with a smile. Because he clearly valued them, the students were quick to trust. This proved helpful as he began teaching. He was eager to get started, so he taught a couple of mini-lessons toward the end of the first week, and he taught a full-period vocabulary lesson on his eighth day. In addition, right from the start, he was very effective teaching one-on-one. At the end of the first week, students were working on five-paragraph essays in the computer lab, and without me prompting him, naturally moved from student to student, checking for understanding. He was comfortable working with the kids, and they were equally comfortable working with him.

As he began taking over teaching, I was impressed by his ability to plan and execute lessons. He is intuitively observant and able to modify pacing and methodology when needed. He also clearly teaches with the student in mind. For example, after aligning with the standards, he then uses a wide variety of instructional methods: iPads, free writes, pair shares, prearranged/strategic groupings, power points for guided note taking, jigsaw reading assignments, literary characters’ Snap Chat and Twitter feeds, analogical thinking activities, and more. Because he does a superb job of relating to kids and “hooking” them, he is then able to help the students navigate difficult concepts like propaganda, tyranny, allegory, allusion, and theme. He is truly a talented instructor!

is also able to make learning accessible to all. He clearly understands and meets the needs of different levels of learners. On his own initiative, he spent time with the special education teacher in order to modify material and meet IEP goals. He also had conversations with the Gifted and Talented coordinator in the building in order to understand the needs of gifted learners. While teaching his Animal Farm unit, he tiered various lessons for the different ability groups, and he made three versions of the final assessment: a standard version, a modified version, and an honors-level version.

In addition, his ability to communicate is very effective. His classroom management is excellent due to his ability to communicate his expectations. He also effectively worked with colleagues as he participated in staff, PLC, interdisciplinary team, and English department meetings. He also joined me at parent-teacher conferences and was very comfortable communicating in that setting as well. He is simply someone who enjoys being with people.

Finally, is a remarkable teacher filled with integrity and initiative. He welcomes feedback from both his peers and his students, and he is a life-long learner who is reflective, open-minded, and self-motivated. Any district will be fortunate to have him on their staff. He will inspire both students and staff to keep growing and learning – as he did me!

Sincerely,