



June 11, 2007

DeLong Middle School

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To Whom It **May** Concern:

It is with **great** pleasure that I write this letter of **recommendation** for Joe Mink. I have **had** the privilege to work closely **with** Joe as his cooperating teacher at DeLong Middle School in Eau Claire, Wisconsin during our 4th quarter marking period. **DeLong** Middle School has a population of approximately 950 students **and** is made up of **an** extremely diverse group of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Joe has worked mainly with 7th and 8th grade students from the regular education population as well as our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students with cognitive disabilities.

Joe was **dealt** with a **unique** and challenging task that unexpectedly began **his** very first morning at DeLong Middle School. With myself planning to be on paternity leave at some point early in the **quarter**, Joe took the **initiative** to visit our school ahead **of** time to review our **class schedule**, rosters, course outlines, and curriculum. Joe was **also** involved **in** meetings with counselors and other staff members to get to know our students **and** school policies **as well** as possible before hand. My newborn son decided to enter the world early, **leaving** Joe with very little **direction** **and** more first-day responsibilities than anticipated. Joe stepped into the role of lead teacher tremendously well and felt **comfortable** enough to continue his full-time **teaching responsibilities** when I **returned** three weeks later.

In the classroom, **Joe** has communicated very clearly with his students. Before beginning new **lab** activities, Joe would explain the procedure students should follow **when** they **have a** question. The student checklist Joe taught students to use gave three other **options** before students would need to ask him. This gave students **a** chance to **teach** what **they** sometimes already knew **and** allowed Joe to **offer** help to those students who truly needed it the most. The instructions Joe would explain before each lab activity not only helped him **manage the classroom better, but also gave students a sense** of ownership and comfort in knowing how to problem solve on their own. **As** students became more self-sufficient, Joe **also** used **a** one-on-one **style** of meeting with **each** student to update them on their progress. This gave each student a clear picture of how **they were** doing in **class**, and **what could** be done to achieve more.

Although some characteristics, such as clear communication skills are readily apparent, other traits are discovered over **time**. Joe's commitment to becoming a quality teacher became even more evident as I was **able** to observe his work ethic throughout **the** quarter. During **this** time, Joe displayed outstanding professional qualities **in** addition to his fine personal **qualities**. Even though **he** was not expected to, Joe enthusiastically jumped at the opportunity to work with students outside of the classroom every chance he was given. Joe chose to volunteer his time after school to help us run our annual disc golf tournament for students with special **needs**, made himself available to help with our school's **Afternoon** of Excellence ceremony, and **offered** to fill the void I left as an assistant softball coach if **needed**. I believe **Joe** understands the importance of seizing any opportunity he has to build positive relationships with students. **Joe's** positive attitude **and** proactive nature has made working with him even more enjoyable. **Joe's** unique personal characteristics have been, and will continue to be, a major asset to his teaching career.

I urge the employer who might have some doubts to do a face-to-face Interview with Joe. I believe his positive characteristics will be quite apparent. Joe Mink is a person of outstanding character. I highly recommend him for a teaching position without hesitation. Please feel **free** to call me at (715) **831-3938** if I **can** be of **further** assistance.

Sincerely,

Ben Dallman
Technology Education Teacher & Department Chair
DeLong Middle School