

Rebecca Himschoot

PO Box 6075

Sitka, AK 99835

[himschootr@sitkaschools.org](mailto:himschootr@sitkaschools.org)

(907)738-6744

February 20, 2016

Dear Colleague,

It is my distinct pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Chris Bryner. Chris was my student teacher in 2009, and has been a valued colleague since beginning his position with the Sitka School District that academic year. He has experience in third and fourth grades, as well as prior experience in higher education. I have taught in formal and informal education for well over 20 years, with 11 of those in Sitka School District at the elementary level. Recently I was appointed by the governor of the state of Alaska to serve on the Alaska Board of Education and Early Development, a position I was selected for due to my reputation as an advocate for quality education professionals. With this in mind, there is no educator I would give a higher endorsement than Chris.

Chris brings a variety of talents and strengths to his teaching. He has shown leadership by serving on district-wide committees, he excels in social-emotional learning, and he establishes a powerful and effective classroom climate through carefully crafted lessons and a dedication to family outreach. Chris is innovative in his lesson planning, and possesses the "toolkit" of a far more experienced teacher. Along with a firm grasp of the content he teaches, Chris brings a breadth of experience and a commitment to educating the whole child.

Chris has shown leadership in his early years as a teacher. He excels in the appropriate use of technology, and has served on the technology advisory committee, as well as the professional development committee in our district. His awareness of current trends in education technology has allowed Chris to design and implement lessons capitalizing on student use of computers, such as Skyping with experts or learning through Minecraft. He maintains a classroom blog to facilitate parent communication, and has advised colleagues in the use of a variety of technology tools.

Chris has emerged as an educational leader for classroom teachers in our school. Chris is currently hosting his first student teacher, and he is guiding her development with great insight and the reflection he brings to his own teaching. He is considered the leader of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade team, and his strong organizational skills help him succeed in this role.

One of Chris' greatest strengths as a classroom teacher is the climate he develops and nurtures – his class often functions more as a "team" than just a class. By incorporating a number of hands-on learning experiences, such as "Coffee Kids," and facilitating weekly class meetings, Chris helps students develop emotionally as well as academically. He seamlessly weaves these equally important skills into engaging

lessons that guide and challenge students, and make him a widely sought after 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher for many families in Sitka.

In developing lessons, Chris carefully threads together the requirements of our school's curriculum with supplemental materials from a variety of web and print resources to create unique, hands-on, engaging lessons in all curriculum areas. He breaks the content into manageable chunks, all the while keeping an eye on the broader content goal and providing multiple opportunities for formative assessment. He has a natural gift for connecting curriculum areas together and an amazing ability to think on his feet when he encounters a "teachable moment." I have even seen him create a game on the spot, outside of his intended lesson plans, to re-teach a concept.

While Chris is a well above average classroom teacher, I believe he would be successful in any education position for which he applied. His particular strengths in digital learning, coupled with his classroom experience, suggest he would thrive in a position that emphasizes education technology. That said, he is very successful as a classroom teacher, and any school lucky enough to hire Chris would see great growth in his students.

It is without hesitation that I recommend Chris Bryner for any position he seeks, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss his skills further at any time. While I understand the importance of moving closer to family for Chris, his absence will be a serious loss for our school.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Himschoot