



Tucker School
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Drew Echelson
Principal

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To Whom It May Concern:

I have known Mrs. Rebecca Vyduna for the past year in her role as Principal Intern at the Tucker Elementary School and enthusiastically recommend her for the position of Principal. She is one of the most dedicated educators I have met in my career spanning elementary and middle school teaching and administration. She is an exceptional candidate because she has the intellectual orientation, the belief system, the performance skills the experience, the resourcefulness, and the capacity for hard work that are necessary to do the job well.

An area of particular strength for Mrs. Vyduna is her demonstrated instructional leadership. Mrs. Vyduna has a clear understanding of the importance of principal visibility in the classrooms and learning areas of a school strengthened by ongoing observation and feedback to improve classroom instruction. She is well-versed in conducting learning walks as a method for improving instruction, supervision, and support for teacher and in her coursework with Dr. Richard Elmore, Anrig Professor of Educational Leadership at Harvard Graduate School of Education, developed a protocol for using evidence to evaluate teacher performance. She has applied the protocol to her current work of supervising over fifteen teachers—both new and experienced—at the Tucker School and has become extremely skilled in giving immediate, honest, and helpful feedback to teachers that is based on actual discourse, teaching moves, and artifacts from classroom instruction. To-date, her observations, analyses, and feedback on teacher performance have led to profound and concrete improvements in Tucker classrooms.

She has also shown strong instructional leadership by her active role in facilitating discourse with the school's Instructional Leadership Team and staff and grade level team meetings focused on data analysis. In this work she guided teachers in studying the performance of students in the school on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), analyzing items and the standards they measure, and using that information to determine curriculum alignment needs as well as the professional development necessary for teachers to ramp up instruction to meet specific standards identified as weak for Tucker students.

Ms. Vyduna knows firsthand the importance of focused professional development in improving classroom instruction and student achievement. She committed herself to learn, side-by-side with teachers, the conceptual frameworks of teaching literacy through the Readers' and Writers' Workshop and an investigative approach toward mathematics through Everyday Math by participating and leading Collaborative Coaching and Learning cycles at the school and in demonstration lessons in classrooms. Going beyond the traditional role of an intern, Ms. Vyduna has championed a strong instructional focus in the school, based on data, while maintaining a supportive climate for teachers through personal modeling, coaching and feedback. She understands, intuitively, that a school leader must play a key role in improving instruction in all classroom, for all students, all the time. She has skillfully performed this skill and has a demonstrated record of improving instruction while at the Tucker School. She also models adult learning by her eagerness to gain the knowledge she needs to do her job more effectively. Currently she is enrolled in Dr. Elmore's graduate course on *Supporting Teachers for Instructional Improvement* and serves as a team leader for a group of Tucker teachers and interns who are enrolled in Dr. Thomas Hehir's *Principles of Inclusion* course in which she is also enrolled.

My Vyduna has a deep belief in effort-based education and that all students through hard work and efficacy can perform at higher levels. Through her teaching and through her work as an administrator, she understands how a school needs to be structured so that it is organized for effort. She supervises displays of student work throughout the school that have changed from art and photographs to a variety of written work in all subject areas that visually demonstrates students' efforts to move toward standards. She also has skill at performing the operational responsibilities of a school leader and emphasizes the use of preventive strategies so that instructional time is not lost on discipline problems. Through her active participation in teacher performance evaluation, she is skilled at pinpointing classrooms that promote effort-based learning and those that do not. She deeply believes that all students can and should be expected to make progress in learning and accepts no excuses or exceptions. She constantly applies that belief in her work with instructional teams at the school with the sole purpose of supporting teachers in closing the performance gap.

I want to emphasize that I have focused on these two areas because of their profound effect on instruction. Mrs. Vyduna has a great number of other administrative strengths that she constantly and energetically uses in her current role in the school. In her daily practice, school leadership is not a discrete set of elements, but, in fact, merges into a multi-dimensional leadership style that has at its core her deep desire to improve the instruction in a variety of observable ways.

I can think of no other candidate more deserving of the position of Principal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have further questions.

Very truly yours,



Drew M. Echelson