

Redwood High School

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Stephanie Ogden,
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March 3, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with pleasure that I write this letter recommending Matthew McHan as a teacher candidate for your school. Throughout my experience in public education, I have had the opportunity to work with and coach numerous teachers across various educational settings, from transitional kindergarten all the way through high school. Matt is one of the strongest new teachers I have had the pleasure to work with, and his drive to continuously improve will undoubtedly lead him to continue performing at a high level in the classroom and beyond.

I have directly supervised Matt since July of 2018 in his work as a fine arts and digital arts teacher at Redwood High School, a high-need continuation high school in Redwood City. Since his arrival at the school in 2017, Matt has been an indispensable addition to our school community. His work ethic is contagious, and students respond incredibly positively to his creative, personable, and structured approach.

Matt is deeply committed to his work at Redwood High School, where he has taught and supported a diverse set of students from all walks of life. Many of those students grew up in poverty in the San Francisco Bay Area, facing various financial, health, and environmental stressors since they were young children. Matt knows how to balance setting up strong structures and expectations for the whole group while more deeply understanding and supporting the needs of individual students, leading to high student achievement and engagement.

Teaching and managing a classroom at an alternative continuation setting is a tough task to master, and Matt's positive, humor-filled approach to classroom management works very well for this challenging environment. Students love learning from and with Matt, and he is able to navigate difficult management situations with various students because they enjoy being in his classroom as much as he does. There were numerous occasions where my work would take me to his classroom in the middle of a busy day, and I relished spending time in his calm, creative classroom where students were re-discovering the joy of learning and exercising their artistic side.

In addition to his work in the classroom, Matt contributes to the entire school community by being a trusted and supportive colleague and team player. Matt has completed numerous projects for our school, such as building the school website, decorating our common spaces with student work, simplifying our behavior referral system, helping teachers share best practices for cell phone policies, providing music for our back-to-school night, and much more. He is always willing to pitch in where he can, and he communicates extremely well with management and colleagues.

Matt and his numerous contributions will be missed at our school. He is a stellar part of our community, and will make a great addition to any school lucky enough to have him.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bh' with a stylized flourish.

Berton Mahardja
Vice Principal
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