



Terry Walsh
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October 19, 2010
Letter of Recommendation

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to give my highest recommendation for Mr. Owen Cegielski (Mr. C as he is known to his students) as a history teacher at your school. I have been the principal at Carbon Valley Secondary Academy (CVSA) since the end of January, 2010. In this short time, I have had the pleasure of sitting in on a variety of lesson types that Mr. C has led. He has had students present cases before the "Supreme Court", with himself as Chief Justice; had students role playing in costume (a 6th graders performance as Marie Antoinette was truly remarkable); had 9th graders creating their own form of government in the mythical country of Borka; and had students (before I came to CVSA) build a working model of a trebuchet. One of his own best roles is when he plays Mr. Fluggenhoggen, an evil factory owner during the early industrial revolution years who employed child laborers. In this role, he portrayed the worst of times of that era before students had to write laws that they would enact in order to deal with factory managers like Mr. Fluggenhoggen. Besides a variety of role playing lessons, Mr. C also has his students create Power Point presentations, video documentaries, Google Sketch Up models of historical events, and 3-D models of historical items such as the Terra Cotta Chinese soldiers, the pyramids or Sphinx, or other important historical ideas. Students debate each other and participate in Socratic Seminars, in order to further make history literally come alive in Mr. C's class. Due to how well he engages students in his lessons, class management is rarely an issue that he needs to address. However, if a student is not participating or is off task, Mr. C addresses it in a positive manner that results in better behavior. He has excellent rapport with students, parents, other teachers, and the entire school community.

In addition to having great lessons that involve students, Mr. C has also been a very positive influence on the school community. Last Spring, when I approached him about starting an AP History class here, he was very enthusiastic about the chance to do that. He helped to recruit students into the AP World History class, completed the AP Audit, took a week long workshop, and gave students summer assignments they needed to complete to be in AP. This was in addition to being on the school Accountability Committee for two years, before becoming the lead person for our Response to Interventions (RtI) group which was formally implemented this year. Last spring, he suggested that we begin a Student Government at CVSA and became the sponsor for that student group. He has also participated in IEP meetings and has led some of our teacher directed Professional Development programs. This year, we hired two new teachers, one only two days before school started. Mr. C has been very helpful to both new teachers as a

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mentor. He has also been one of the teachers involved in interviewing perspective teachers as well as administrators.

If you are looking for someone who can lecture out of a history text, and have students take notes to memorize for a multiple choice exam, Mr. C might not be the answer to your quest. However, if you are looking for an innovative, tech savvy instructor who uses student centered lessons to make history come alive, you would be hard pressed to hire anyone better than Mr. C. The closing of the high school at CVSA in December, 2010 due to state budget cuts might be the best thing that happened to your students if it gives them the chance to have Mr. C as their teacher!

If you have any questions, or need more information, please call or email me:

Terry Walsh, CVSA Principal
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Sincerely,

Terry Walsh, Principal CVSA
Work Hard, Be Nice (school motto)

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